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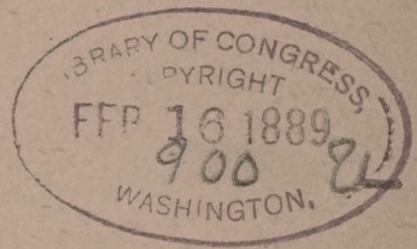


THE RESCUE.

CADDO:

— OR, —

CUPID IN THE GAS BELT.



A Story from Real Life.

BY

James Charles
CHAS. J. WAYNE. *pseud.*

Illustrated.



RICHMOND, IND.:

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TO MY DEVOTED WIFE,
WHO HAS DOUBLED MY JOYS, DIVIDED MY SORROWS,
AND MADE MY HOME CHEERFUL AND HAPPY,
AND WHOSE PURE, SWEET LIFE HAS BEEN A CONSTANT
INSPIRATION AND BENEDICTION TO ME,
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,
BY
THE AUTHOR.

PREFATORY.

The author having been thrown for many years amongst all classes of people in our Western States and Territories, where some of the drollest, as well as some of the saddest life scenes are often witnessed; and more recently, with that conglomerate mass of humanity found in the newly discovered gas and oil fields of Ohio and Indiana; he has, per force of habit, jotted down many interesting incidents from *real life*, as seen by him from both mirthful and grave stand-points, and has embodied some of them in this story. He has tried to give these pen-pictures as nearly in the language of the characters presented, as will be admissible in a book that seeks a place in our purest homes; but for obvious reasons, he has substituted other names than those by which the persons and places described are known.

Should the language seem rough or uncouth in some of its pages, or should the story smack of romance, the only apology must be: it could not otherwise have been *true to life*.

“What is love, that all the world
Talk so much about it?
What is love, that neither you
Nor I can do without it?”

CADDY.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESCUE.

“How’er it be, it seems to me,
’Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And *simple worth* than Norman blood.”

“GREAT Cæsar! Bill, look at them ’ere dogs a fightin’. They’re a rollin’ an’ tumblin’ right toward Doc. Blackfoot’s hoss, an’ Nora has jist got into the buggy. There’ll be a runaway as sure as shootin’. Yes, here they come, lickety-cut, an’ Nora will be thrown out an’ killed, sure.”

The horse came dashing down Main street on a furious run, and the terrified girl pulling only on one rein, screaming “Whoa, whoa! help! stop him!” while the men on the street ran out of the way of the frightened beast, each, though, yelling, “Head him off, stop him, whoa,” etc., when Mr. Slathers, a tall, broad-shouldered man, who had first called attention to the dog fight and frightened horse, sprang to the rescue and caught the rein next to him as they passed, but pulling it with such force that it snapped like a thread in his powerful hand, and the speed of the frightened animal was rather increased than checked by the effort.

George Hartley, a lad of seventeen, was coming up the sidewalk, a square below, and had seen the

horse start, and knowing that Nora's life was in danger, determined to stop the furious beast at the risk of his own life; so, springing with the agility of a cat to the horse's head as he came dashing down the street, caught with both hands to the bridle, near the bit, and was dragged along for half a square, sometimes apparently under the horse's feet, and then again swinging around by his side, but finally bringing the frantic steed to a full stop by turning it up to a rack at the sidewalk in front of Mr. Johnson's store.

A dozen lazy loafers now stepped forward to help the frightened girl out of the buggy, after they saw that young Hartley had brought the horse to a safe halt, and had him under complete control.

But Mr. Slathers, the man who had first caught the rein, had followed on with all possible speed and was by the side of the buggy as soon as the horse was stopped, almost walking over them, as he said, "Clair outen here, you lazy, sneakin' cowards," and reaching up towards the frightened child, she instinctively sprang into his strong arms and was tenderly lifted to the sidewalk.

"You cussed cowardly whelps," said he, "to run an' squall like a passel uv skeered chickens with a hawk arter 'em, 'stid uv tryin' to do somethin' sensible to stop the hoss, an' now when you see there ain't no danger, to come shinin' around here bigger 'n boots. Clair outen here, I tell you," and the loafers dropped back, much as a lot of curs would have done from a furious Newfoundland dog.

"Here, George, you saved the girl, so you jist take her home, an' I'll take keer uv the hoss, for the lines is all broke up, an' she's too skeered to ride anyhow. But

say, George, you're hurt, ain't ye? Whar's all that blood a comin' from?"

All eyes were now turned toward the brave boy.

A sharp point on the horse's shoe had cut quite a gash just below his knee, which was bleeding rapidly, and he was also spitting blood quite copiously.

"Oh, George! you are badly hurt. What shall we do?" cried Nora, who was the first one to his side.

"Oh! this amounts to nothing. I shall soon be all right," said he, but with these words he fell fainting to the sidewalk, for the knee of the horse had struck him on the side and chest, bruising him deeply, which caused bleeding from his lungs.

"Here, Bill Arnett, you run quick for Doc. Black-foot," said the man who had lifted the frightened girl to the sidewalk; and stooping down, he lifted the wounded boy tenderly as any other man in the crowd could have done for a little child, and carrying him into the store, laid him on a lounge in the office.

The man addressed ran with all haste to Dr. Black-foot's office, and on entering said, "Doctor, Henry Hartley's boy is killed down at Johnson's store, and they want you down there quick."

"Well, if he is killed I can do him no good," said the Doctor, "I am neither a resurrectionist nor an undertaker."

"Well, Josh Slathers said for me to tell you to come quick."

"Did no one else send for me?"

"No, sir, not as I heard."

By this time Nora came running in, trembling and almost breathless: "Pa, they want you quick at Johnson's store. George Hartley is there and badly hurt."

“Well, Arnett, this puts another face on the matter, and you may tell them I’ll be there in a few minutes.” So saying he took his pill bags and a few surgical instruments, and hastened to the side of the wounded boy. His sensible daughter had not taken time to tell of the runaway or even how the boy was hurt, as she feared that every moment lost might prove fatal to the one who had risked his life to save hers.

George and Nora had been classmates in school ever since Dr. Blackfoot located in Caddö, and their dispositions being quite congenial, a warm friendship had sprung up between them. But on the contrary, a feeling of hatred on the part of the Doctor and his wife, had for some time existed toward Henry Hartley and his family, in part because he was a farmer and heavily in debt, but chiefly because the Hartley family were Methodists and also strong temperance people.

CHAPTER II.

A HEARTLESS DOCTOR.

CONSCIOUSNESS had been restored, and the flow of blood mainly stopped before the Doctor arrived, through the good sense of the man who had carried George into Mr. Johnson's private office. A half a dozen of the excited loafers came crowding into the little room where Mr. Johnson and one of his clerks led the way to the lounge on which the wounded boy was laid.

They all had suggestions to make as to what should be done, but no one of them seemed willing to do anything but get in the way of those who really had the case in charge.

"Why don't you put water in his face?" said Sam Hooker.

"Better turn him over and pound him on the back," said Abe Green.

"Somebody go and hurry the doctor up; he'll never get here," said Joe Gassett.

"Better—hic—bleed him—hic—if the doctor don't—hic—get here pretty—hic—soon," said old Jerry Wilson, who was too drunk to stand steady, so leaned awkwardly against the door facing.

"I'll bet the Doctor 'll give him a puke when he comes," again yelled Abe Green, "for that's what he give Mrs. Murphy t'other day for the cramps, an' you bet it fetched her quicker'n lightnin'."

“Clair outen here, every dratted one of ye,” said Mr. Slathers, who just then returned from the back yard where he had been for a pail of water. “Mr. Johnson an’ I’ll take care of him ’till the Doctor comes. You’re jist a breathin’ up all the air that he’s a gaspin’ for. Clair out, I tell ye.”

The curious loafers knew better than to wait for a second warning from Josh Slathers, as he was familiarly called by everybody in Caddo, so filed out, muttering their curses against “the green Yankee that didn’t know enough to nuss a sick cat.”

The Doctor arrived a few minutes later, and his examination proved that one rib was broken and two others fractured, while the cut below the knee was only an ugly flesh wound.

He could not tell, however, how seriously he had been bruised internally; and as he had not yet learned how or why the boy was hurt, he showed more indifference in the case than the attendants thought he should. So when he told George that he had better try to get home as soon as he felt like walking, Mr. Slathers indignantly protested against his trying to walk home. The look of intense pain on George’s face touched the great, kind heart of Joshua Slathers, and turning to the doctor, he said:

“Now, look here, Doc. Blackfoot, that ’ere boy ain’t fitten to try walkin’, an’ he shan’t walk a durned step either; an’ you orto be ashamed to ax him to, after savin’ your daughter’s life like he did. Why, ef it hadn’t been fer his ketchin’ your dratted runaway hoss, it would a been Nora instid o’ him a needin’ your attention about now.”

“How is this, Mr. Johnson? I don’t understand it,” said the Doctor.

“He can tell you more about it than I can, Doctor,” said Mr. Johnson, nodding his head toward Mr. Slathers, “I knew nothing about the accident until I saw the crowd gathered around the bleeding boy on the sidewalk.”

“Well, Josh, tell us how it happened,” said the Doctor.

“Well, in the fust place, Doc., them cussed dogs of Sam Hooker’s and Abe Green’s got to fightin’ on t’other side o’ the street from your house jist as Nora was a gittin’ into the buggy, an’ afore she could git a holt o’ both lines the durned dogs come a tumblin’ over one ’nother, right under the buggy, and the devil hisself couldn’t a hilt such a cussid runaway hoss as your’n then. I jumped into the street as he come along an’ ketched him by the line that Nora was pullin’ on, but Judas, Doc., it snapped like a rotten shoe string, an’ never checked him a bit more’n ef I’d sneezed at him. An’ every cussed rat on the street an’ sidewalk below hollered an’ run out of the way, all a helpin’ to skeer the hoss wuss’n ever, ’till that brave boy layin’ thar jumped like a cat an’ caught him by the bridle, an’ stuck right to him like brick dust to a bar o’ soap ’till he stopped him right here in front o’ the store.”

“Ah, yes, I understand now,” said the Doctor, “I noticed the horse and buggy were gone, but I thought the girls had driven around to the stable, as they frequently do. Well, George, you are a brave boy, and I certainly feel under obligations to you for your efforts. I will have my buggy sent around to take you home.”

“No you don’t, Doc., not by a darned sight,” said

Slathers, "he shan't be all shuck up that way. Besides, that cussed hoss is so near skeered to death now that there mout be another runaway, an' that'd finish George, the fix he's in. Jest you take a holt o' the foot o' the lounge an' I'll take the head and the heft o' the weight, an' we'll carry him home, for it ain't more'n half a mile."

"I think this plan the better one," said Mr. Johnson, "and I will have some of my men to assist you."

But as George's father just then came in, he and Mr. Slathers carried the sufferer home on the lounge in as easy a manner as possible, but weeks passed before he was sufficiently recovered to be able to walk out.

The Doctor called daily for more than a week, but could do but little for the relief of his patient; in fact, his sensible mother did about all that could be done for him. All of his classmates called frequently to see him, and their little tokens of kindness were very grateful to his heart, but none of them so much so as the beautiful bouquets which Nora always brought him.

As before stated, Dr. Blackfoot was not friendly toward the family of Henry Hartley, and now that he saw that his patient was recovering and out of danger, he forbade his daughter's further manifestation of her gratitude to George for what he had risked and suffered to save her from danger.

"I shall not permit you to pay any further attention to any of the Hartley family, Nora," said the father, "now that the boy is out of danger, even if his other classmates choose to do so. You must understand that they are poor, laboring people, and the whole family have to work hard on their farm and economize closely, and I have recently learned that their farm is

heavily mortgaged, and they will probably lose that, in which case they will be little better than paupers. Besides, they are every one Methodists and fanatical on the temperance question, and I hope that no child of mine will disgrace us by recognizing these Hartleys as being on friendly terms with us. Do you understand what I mean, Nora?"

"I think I do, papa; but surely you would not wish me to be less expressive of my appreciation of George's kindness than any member of our class, since his suffering was all caused by his efforts to save me from possibly a worse fate?"

"I mean just what I say, Nora, and I shall expect you to pay no further attention to George, or any other fanatical Hartley."

It was hard for Nora to keep back her tears, as she felt that her father was so unreasonable in his demands; but this course had just the opposite effect with her from what her proud father intended, for her sympathies were now more than ever enlisted for her afflicted classmate. She had noticed that his clothes were of the cheaper grade, but they were always scrupulously neat and clean. She had heard the day before that the Hartley family were compelled to exercise the most rigid economy in order to keep their home, and at the same time keep their children comfortably clothed and in school; and now that her father had confirmed the statement by speaking of their poverty, she determined to make one more effort in their behalf, so she said, "Well, papa, as they are so poor I hope you will charge them nothing for what you have done in this case, as I should have been the one who required all the attention if it had not been for his bravery in stopping our horse."

Dr. Blackfoot saw that his daughter's sympathies were drawn out toward the sufferer, and knowing that it is "only a step from pity to love," he determined if possible to build an insuperable barrier between his own family and every member of that of Henry Hartley. He hated the latter most intensely for his temperance principles; besides, wealth was the idol he worshiped; poverty the demon he detested. While he loved his daughter, yet he had inherited from his father a stern, inflexible will that would not allow him to yield a point on account of her wishes, so he replied:

"You are too young, Nora, to understand much about business. I shall be very reasonable in my charges in this case, as I am with all very poor people. Besides, I fear you put too much stress on the mere act of his stopping the horse. Why, it was no more than his duty, which any one should have done under the circumstances, and I wish you to dismiss this subject from your mind now and give your whole attention to your studies."

Nora made no reply, but left the room with a heavy heart.

"How can papa be so selfish?" thought she, as she resumed her studies in the library. "If ever I am a woman and have any means at my disposal, I shall take pleasure in helping such noble poor people rather than in any way to oppress them."

But in order that the reader may have a better idea of Dr. Blackfoot's character, a sketch of his early life must be given.

CHAPTER III.

COLLEGE DAYS.

TEN years ago, Caddo was a beautiful town of less than three thousand inhabitants, and situated in what is now known as the "Natural Gas Belt." For years past her citizens had been noted for their interest in schools, churches, and especially in the temperance work, as they had not at that time tolerated a saloon in their town.

A few years before the opening of our story, Dr. Blackfoot, of Albany, New York, located with his family in Caddo. The Doctor was a man of commanding appearance, with dark brown eyes and full black beard slightly tinged with grey, for he was nearing the meridian of life. He could be very sociable and friendly at times, but as a rule was not so; and the close observer could not fail to detect in him, on certain occasions, a restless, uneasy movement, that was suggestive of some apprehended danger.

Mrs. Blackfoot was an unusually handsome woman of forty, and far more than the Doctor's equal in social qualities, but scarcely equaling him in pride and avarice.

Their son Archibald, who was nineteen at the time of their removal to Caddo, was rough and uncouth in his manners, besides being so disgustingly profane and overbearing that the boys called him "Bull-dog Blackfoot."

Their three daughters, Belle, Nora and Kate, were beautiful girls, though all of a different type.

Belle, the eldest, a girl of seventeen, was rather tall, with dark brown eyes and auburn hair.

Nora, two years younger, was of medium height, and round, full form, with light blue eyes and flaxen hair, and while she was the most beautiful, she was also by far the most lovely in her character.

Kate, a girl of ten years, was as nearly the picture of her father as a girl ever could be, with jet black hair, and dark, restless eyes, that told of a raging temper within, which at times was uncontrollable.

But that the reader may more clearly understand the nature of one of our chief characters, we must go back to the boyhood days of Dr. Blackfoot.

He was the only son of Mr. John Blackfoot, a wealthy liquor dealer of Albany, New York. Mr. Blackfoot had given Richard, for this is the Doctor's name, every educational advantage that money could bestow, but had neglected that heart training, without which, no life, even in the business world, is safe. His mother, though, was an earnest Christian, and often had she prayed with and for her son through his early boyhood days, that God would make of him a pure, noble and true man.

These lessons were not wholly unheeded by Richard, for until he left the parental roof to attend college, he seldom neglected his hours of devotion and secret prayer. Indeed, for weeks after entering college, he daily thought of his promise to his devoted mother as she gave him her own beautiful pocket Bible with her parting kiss, and begged him to make this book his daily counselor and friend.

"You will be surrounded by temptations and dangers on every hand, Richard," said she, "but so long as you

rely, not on yourself, but God, for help, you will be safe. Read from this blessed book daily, my son, not for my sake only, nor because I have asked it, but for the sake of him who gave his life's blood for you, and who has promised to be strength to you in every hour of temptation and need. As to your personal or temporal wants we have always given you everything you need, and shall send you from time to time as much money as is required for any reasonable expenditures while you are in college; but you must keep an accurate account of all you expend, and what it is for, as you will not then be so likely to use your money foolishly."

It is needless to say that Richard promised compliance with his mother's wishes in all of these matters, for he dearly loved and honored her; and there was no personal sacrifice he would not cheerfully make for her sake.

But little did he know the weakness of his own character. While kneeling at his mother's side, shut out from the world and those who would ridicule his devotions, it was easy enough to attend to these duties. But as another student, George Grant, occupied the same room with himself, who, so far as he could discover, had never received any religious training, he felt it would be impossible to read even his mother's Bible, and kneel as had been his custom, at the evening altar, in his presence. Oh, how different might his whole life have been, had he sacredly kept the promises given with the parting kiss to his mother; for his roommate had made similar promises to his Christian parents on leaving his religious home, and with as little thought that he, too, would soon yield to the temptations to heedlessly neglect such sacred duties.

CHAPTER IV.

BROKEN VOWS.

“There is a time, we know not when,
A point, we know not where,
That marks the destiny of man
To glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen,
That crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God’s patience and his wrath.

“To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth;
It may not quench the beaming eye,
Or pale the glow of health.
Oh, where is this mysterious bourne
By which our path is crossed;
Beyond which, God himself hath sworn,
That he who goes is lost.”

NOT until the day before Richard left college did he learn that his room-mate had been reared in a Christian home, and was daily stifling his Christian mother’s prayers. Coming into his room hastily one day near the close of the college term, he found two letters lying on the table. One was from an old school-mate, Ned Saunders, who had gone a few months before with his parents to the far west.

In addition to his glowing description of the wild scenery around their new western home, the whole letter was full of sprightly humor, which caused him more than one hearty laugh, before he came to the postscript, which ran as follows:

“Richard, don’t let the matrimonial bee get in your bonnet before you have seen the west. Also, kindly extend my invitation to your jolly room-mate to come with you and spend your vacation with us. By the way, you will please let him read this letter, if you do not object to his knowing how poor a correspondent you have.”

“By Jove!” exclaimed Richard, as he finished reading the letter, “Ned is a jolly good correspondent, and I must let George read this letter as soon as he comes in. But where is this other letter from? The post-mark is so dim I can’t make it out, but the writing looks familiar. Yes, it must be father’s. I wonder why *he* has written, as mother writes all the social letters, and I was looking for her letter to-day.”

He opened the letter and in it found a hastily written note from his father, telling him to start immediately for home, stating that the enclosed letter from his mother would be sufficient explanation.

With trembling hands he seized his mother’s letter, which, in his excitement, had fallen to the floor, with the empty envelope and the letter from Ned Saunders.

The letter ran as follows:

“ALBANY, N. Y., Dec. 20th, 18—.

“MY DEAR SON RICHARD.—

“The time has now come for you to know that you may soon be motherless, and much as I dislike to throw a shadow over your pathway, yet I feel something impelling me to write to you as I never have before; for this may be the last letter your mother’s hand will ever pen to you.

“While you have known that my health has been failing for some months past, yet you have not known the

cause. Dr. Anderson pronounced my malady an internal tumor several weeks ago, and yesterday, he, in consultation with Drs. Johnson and Cutter, decided that a critical surgical operation would be necessary in order to save my life.

“As Dr. Cutter leaves for Chicago on the 24th, they have decided to perform the operation next Friday, and your father thinks we had better have you come home. As the time is so near at hand, and accidents or delays may occur to prevent your arrival in time for me to say all I wish before my strength fails me, I shall leave a few words on these pages for you to treasure when the hand that now writes, and these lips which have so often kissed you, shall lie cold in death. It is hard for me to leave you and father, but God knows what is best, and I have learned to trustingly say, “Thy will be done.”

“Oh, Richard! be ever true to your vows. Be true to the promises you made to your mother when you took her parting kiss, ever to make God’s Word your counselor and guide, and daily to bend your knees to Him in prayer. He only can help you in the dark hours of temptation, which will come to you, as come they must to all. But with every victory over temptation, even though it be that of denying your Savior before your roommate, by neglecting your Bible and evening devotions in his presence; if you conquer this sin, you will become stronger in your Christian life, and doubtless too in his estimation and affections. For if George is the noble young man you say he is, your united prayers doubtless ascend daily as sweet incense to the Giver of all good. Oh, Richard, your Bible and your daily prayers will

be the sheet anchors to your soul in all your coming life, if you do not forsake them."

Richard could read no more, for every word seemed to send a thrill of pain through his soul. He dropped the letter on the floor, and bowed his head in grief on the table before him.

How bitterly he reproached himself for all his broken vows.

"O, mother!" he sobbed, "how can I ever look in your sweet face again and tell you what a coward I have been? Well, this ends my college days, for I shall never leave my mother again. With her, I can be brave. Away from her, I am indeed a coward. I must see the college faculty immediately, and make my arrangements for taking the early morning train homeward. But here comes George, and I am in no mood for talking with him."

So hastily gathering up the letters and putting each, as he supposed, in its proper envelope, dropped them on the table. After gathering up a few articles that he feared might be forgotten, and putting them in his trunk, he walked back past the table as his room-mate entered, and putting, as he supposed, his mother's letter in his pocket, he handed the other to George, saying, "I am requested to let you read this letter, and as I shall be out for a short time, you can look over it while I am gone."

George opened the letter and glancing over it said, "Why, this is a lady's hand; whose can it be? Well, Dick said he was requested to give it to me to read, so here goes."

"My Dear Son Richard." "Why this must be from his mother. I wonder why he never showed me any

of her letters before? Perhaps, though, for the same reason that I have concealed my mother's from him. I'll see."

George had scarcely read to the point at which Richard dropped the letter, when the latter re-entered the room.

"Oh, Richard!" said he, "what a fool and coward I have been. Here you have had the manhood to show me your mother's letter, which has doubtless been in your heart to do all the time, and I, like the coward that I am, have never dared to show you any of my mother's letters for fear you would learn that I, too, had made a similiar promise to my Christian mother before leaving home, that it appears you have made to yours. Oh, Richard! how often after reading one of her loving letters, have I wished that you would propose the course indicated in this excellent letter from your mother that you have so kindly let me read, and for which I sincerely thank you."

"I deserve no thanks from you, George, for I see I have made a mistake and given you my mother's letter instead of Ned Saunders'. But since you have shown your approval of my mother's sentiments, I now heartily wish I had let you read them all. I shall take the early morning train for home, but I shall never enter college again. I have no power to resist temptation when not under my mother's influence, and I shall never leave her again."

"Oh, Richard, I hope your mother's health may soon be fully restored, so that you can at least return early in the term; for I shall now miss you more than ever, and we could help each other in the future to be true to our vows."

“You might help me, George, but I could never help any one. I believe the very devil has possession of me now; for I feel almost angry at the Almighty for permitting such terrible maladies to exist as that which afflicts my mother. Why do these horrible diseases exist? If God is a good and loving Father, why does he permit such things? I cannot understand it.”

“Neither do I, Richard, but I cannot doubt God’s goodness and fatherly care over us. My mother says the things which we cannot understand now in this life, will be made plain and clear to us in that brighter and better future existence, and our adoration of him who then reveals himself and his works to us more fully, will be infinitely heightened by these new revelations. Have there not been times when you did not understand why your loving mother had to cross you in some of your wishes? And have you not as you have grown older seen the wisdom of her course with you? Can you doubt her love?”

“Oh, no, George, I know she is the embodiment of all that is pure and good. I can sometimes see all these things as you do. But for weeks past I have felt that God is far from me, and when I read this letter from my mother a spirit of rebellion against him seemed to take possession of me, and now I have no inclination to pray to him as mother does, and say, ‘Thy will be done.’”

Richard being an only child, his wishes had generally been indulged, and thus a selfish spirit had been fostered in him that was destined to mar his whole future life. He felt as the train was rapidly bearing him homeward the next day, that if God would spare his mother’s life, he could then love, and lift his prayers

to him. But this was not to be; for the operation, as is frequently the case in such maladies, was attended with more difficulty than the doctors had anticipated, as other complications than the tumor were met with, which made a successful operation impossible. So three days after Richard's arrival at home, he was compelled to follow his dearest earthly friend to her grave.

Dark, indeed, were the days and weeks that followed. For as his mother was gone, and his mother's God was shut out of his heart, the consolation offered by sympathizing friends seemed to aggravate, rather than soothe him. Mrs. Cary, his mother's sister, was the only one who could give him any consolation, and as her husband was quite ill, she was compelled to return home immediately after the funeral. He began to think that the doctors' ignorance had been the cause of his mother's death, and this led him to make the science and practice of medicine his life work.

Mr. Blackfoot had been so completely engrossed in business that he failed to give the fatherly care and attention to his son that he so much needed; and since Mrs. Blackfoot was gone, many other cares, to which he had scarcely given a thought before, were now forced upon him. So when Richard expressed a desire to enter a medical college, Mr. Blackfoot left him to make his own choice in the matter, and furnished him all the money he wished, to gratify this desire, without requiring him, as his mother formerly did, to keep an accurate account of his expenditures.

His associates at the medical college were very different from George Grant, nearly all of them being atheists; and before his first college year had ended, all reverence for his mother's God, and his mother's Bible,

had left him. He seemed to consider it a mark of superior wisdom in himself, to be able to ridicule the Bible and discuss "The Mistakes of Moses." His classmates were not slow in learning that his father was wealthy, and they devised many schemes by which they could draw, indirectly, on Mr. Blackfoot's bank account, which became a great annoyance to the old gentleman.

During Richard's first vacation at home, at the close of his first college year, he learned that his father was paying marked attention to a dashing belle of twenty-five—a Miss Rebecca Norton, from Baltimore, who had been spending much of her time in Albany since his mother's death. Richard had good cause for the repugnance he felt toward this woman; for at a party on Grand Avenue, to which both had been invited, she had unwittingly given him a deeper insight of her true character than she was aware of. Miss Norton, with half a dozen other young ladies, were sitting in a group near the door of the drawing room, at which Richard was about to enter, when he heard his father's name, coupled with Miss Norton's, in a way that struck him with surprise and disgust. The door being slightly ajar, he halted a moment. "Can it be possible?" thought he. "If this is eavesdropping, I shall learn all I can now."

"O, Miss Norton, you can't mean it, surely! What will your Baltimore friends say when they hear you have married old Mr. Blackfoot? Why, he is old enough for your grandfather."

"What do I care for his age?" said Miss Norton. "The older the better for my purpose. A cool half million isn't so easily picked up every day."

“Well, but you can never love such a man; and a marriage without any natural affinity will certainly be——”

This was all that Richard could hear, as a slight draft of air from a door at the opposite end of the drawing room closed the door. But when he, some minutes later, entered the room, he was not long in learning from one of the young ladies, whose voice he had recognized, which lady it was that was so coolly planning to become his step-mother.

John Blackfoot was a rather miserly bachelor of forty when he married Richard's mother, and had been successfully engaged in the liquor business for many years. Why such a delicate Christian woman should marry a man who was so different from herself in every respect was a mystery to her friends; yet none doubted her affection for him, nor his for her, so far as he was capable of such feeling. But he was a man of stern, inflexible will, and, by some, considered rather overbearing; yet he was never unkind to his wife, or any one else, who quietly yielded to his will.

CHAPTER V.

HOT WORDS, AND THE DIRE RESULT.

“As wanes the ebb and flow,
So human fortunes rise and fall.”

SOON after Richard entered on his second college year, he became involved in a disgraceful hazing scheme, on account of which he was not only about to be expelled from college, but was also subject to a heavy criminal prosecution. To save not only his son, but himself as well, from this disgrace, Mr. Blackfoot was compelled to pay out a much larger amount than all of his former expenditures had been for his son. This aroused the old gentleman's indignation, and when alone with Richard in his room, he gave his son a most severe reprimand.

“Richard,” said he, “it seems that since your mother died the very devil has been in you. For months past you have been constantly calling on me for money, and I find since coming here that it has been chiefly to get you out of some disgraceful scrape, or to pay a character of debts that no honorable young man would ever contract. And now I tell you, once for all, that I shall never help you out of any more such scrapes, but shall let the law take its course with you in the future. For even though it should place you behind prison bars, you never need hope for aid from me to prevent it. You have disgraced both yourself and me by such dis-

reputable conduct, until I cannot, nor *will* not, stand it any longer."

While Mr. Blackfoot had always been rather austere with his son, yet he had never given him so caustic a reprimand, and Richard, feeling that his father had been unnecessarily severe in his castigations, determined to resent this as an insult to his manhood, and retorted by saying:

"Well, old man, you can go home and give your attentions and money to that Baltimore belle, for I shall not bother you any more, as my tuition and expenses are provided for until I graduate, after which I can take care of myself."

Little did Richard dream of the effect this last insolent retort would have upon his father's future actions. But he now managed to keep out of further serious difficulties until he finished his medical course, and returning to Albany, he opened an office from which he hung the sign, "R. Blackfoot, M. D., Physician and Surgeon."

In the meantime his father had married the Baltimore belle, who had been attracted far more by Mr. Blackfoot's wealth, than any natural affinity between the two; while he had become infatuated by her dazzling beauty and bewitching manners, and took delight in lavishing his wealth and admiration upon her. Mrs. Blackfoot, the second, was not slow in learning that a coldness had sprung up between father and son, and she determined to make the most of her opportunities, to secure, through this breach, the lion's share of Mr. Blackfoot's wealth for herself and brother, Mr. Ezra Norton, of Baltimore, who was now spending much of his time at the Blackfoot mansion. Richard had evinced quite an aversion

toward Mr. Norton from the time they first met in his father's parlor, for which Mrs. Blackfoot, one morning, upbraided him severely, saying,

"You should not treat my brother so coolly, Richard. I am sure he would treat you kindly if you would let him. Neither do I think you show that respect toward your indulgent father that is due from you to him as his son. Remember all that he has recently done for you in helping you out of those disgraceful complications at college, and then giving you a nice office, all fitted up for your occupancy, as soon as you came home."

Richard would have meekly tolerated all that his step-mother said, if she had not so tauntingly referred to his college difficulties; but this was more than his quick temper could bear, and, turning to leave the room, he replied:

"Madam, for I shall never call you by the sacred name of mother, it is my opinion that Mr. Norton is not the only one who has entered this house from mercenary motives, and I tell you frankly I have but little respect for any such stock."

So saying, he pulled the door to behind him with a heavy jar, and walked hastily to his office.

"Never mind, young man," soliloquized Mrs. Blackfoot, as her eyes followed the receding form of Richard as he walked rapidly down the street, "never mind, you'll see the day you will be compelled to treat me with more respect than this. I shall let Mr. Blackfoot know how insolently his son treats us all."

Then going to the library, where her husband was reading the morning paper, she related the incident that had just occurred in the parlor, for which she had been more to blame than Richard, but taking care to color

the whole affair in such a way as to convince Mr. Blackfoot that she was only trying to bring harmony in the family.

“Why, my dear,” she exclaimed, in an injured tone, “I never dreamed that your son could treat me in so insolent a manner, here under your own roof. I know he objected to our marriage, but for him to tell me to my face that I married you for your money is more than I can bear. You know that no such mercenary motives ever entered my head, and to convince him of this fact, you might make your will to-day, giving him every dollar of your wealth at your death, only providing that I shall not be thrown out as a common pauper on the cold charities of the world. Why, dear, I was only asking him to treat you with more respect, since you had always been so kind and indulgent to him.”

Mr. Blackfoot was a man of few words, and of a stern, uncompromising nature. Remembering the insolent language of his son, under his own severe rebuke while at college, he was the more ready to side with his wife against Richard, without giving the latter a chance to be heard.

“Rebecca, said he, “that boy shall treat you with deference, at least. And, as life is uncertain, I shall so arrange my affairs to-day that there shall be no question as to who is entitled to respect here. I shall deed the office that Richard now occupies, together with the residence property adjoining it, to him, and give him \$5,000 in cash, and shall advise him to make the most of it, as this is all he shall have from my estate while you live, unless you see fit to divide with him. Then I shall will all of the remainder of my property, of every character, to you.”

“O, my dear, I cannot ask so much of you, and I surely do not wish to wrong Richard in any way, for doubtless he regrets, ere this, that he used such harsh and unjust language to me, and will make all due apology if you ask him to do so.”

“No, Rebecca, I know my son better than you do, and as he has never apologized to me for the insolent language he used to me last year at college, it is not probable that he will treat you with more consideration, until he learns that it will be to his pecuniary interest to do so.”

“Well, then, would it not be better for you to will your real estate to me in fee-simple, so that I should have unincumbered control of it, and then will half of the remainder to Richard? This would show that you are willing to do a generous thing by him, dear.”

“I am willing to leave the real estate to you as you suggest, Rebecca, but I do not think it will be best to put him in a position in which he would be able to harass you in your business. So I shall also place him at your mercy, by willing my personal property to you besides, and if you see proper to give any part to him, as you doubtless will, if he treats you with due respect, you can do so. This will, at least, teach him a wholesome lesson, and I dare not leave him in a position to give you trouble.”

This was just the object for which Mrs. Blackfoot and her brother had been scheming for weeks, and she was not only delighted, but also surprised, at its easy accomplishment. So, throwing her arms around her husband's neck, and giving him as affectionate a kiss as she was capable of, replied :

“I know you are the dearest and best man on earth, John, and I shall trust you to arrange all these matters, for I don’t understand such business. But I hope it will be many long years that you will be spared to me, for your personal protection is much better and safer than any will could be.”

Mr. Blackfoot had never made a confidant of his son, and the morning scene in the parlor, as depicted by his wife, aroused his anger to such a point that he was in no mood to render Richard justice, and it was easy for him to make the will just as he had promised his wife that it should be. So, going to his office, where his attorney was to meet him at ten o’clock, to arrange some other business matters, he had the lawyer write out his will substantially as agreed upon between himself and wife.

“Would you allow me,” said his attorney, “to suggest that you are practically disinheriting your son? This leaves him entirely at the mercy of his step-mother, unless you make provision for him in some way before this will shall take effect.”

“That I shall do, and you may write out a deed to the office and residence on North C street, which I shall transfer to him, with a sufficient sum of money to start him comfortably in business. Besides this, my wife will be as generous in her treatment of him as his conduct toward her will warrant.”

After having his will properly attested, Mr. Blackfoot drew his check for \$5,000, payable to his son’s order, and placed it, with the will and deed just written, in his pocket, and, after giving some directions about the store and warehouse, returned to his library, taking his attorney, who was a notary, with him. Then, stepping to

the parlor, where his wife and her brother were engaged in earnest conversation, said:

“Rebecca, please come with me;” and on the way to the library said: “I have transferred that property on North C street to Richard, and wish your signature to the deed.”

After this matter was duly arranged, and his attorney had retired, Mr. Blackfoot gave the will to his wife and told her to take care of it; but advised her to reveal nothing of its contents to any one. The first requirement she readily complied with, but the latter had already been violated, as she and her brother had spent the last hour in discussing their future plans and prospects, after she had related to him the conversation between herself and husband with reference to the will.

CHAPTER VI.

A HASTY FATHER AND AN ANGRY SON.

“Content, we may be, to live unknown,
But never to live unloved.”

TWO months prior to the occurrence of the incidents mentioned in the preceding chapter, Mr. J. D. Ludy, a druggist, of Kingston, N. Y., located in Albany. He was a widower, with three daughters, the eldest of whom, Josephine, was a handsome young lady of nineteen, rather above the medium size, and very attractive in her appearance. She frequently assisted her father in his drug store, and here Richard first met her. From a desire to become better acquainted with Miss Ludy, young Dr. Blackfoot not only frequently called at this drug store for his medical supplies, but also occasionally invited her to take rides with him. Josie was not the only girl in Albany who, supposing the young Doctor was to be the chief heir of the Blackfoot estate, determined to make herself especially attractive to him. There was, however, a certain coarseness in her manners that struck Richard unfavorably, and it is not probable that their acquaintance would ever have ripened into more than a passing friendship, but for an incident which occurred some weeks later.

Mrs. Blackfoot was subject to nervous headache, and one of her paroxysms coming on early one morning, Mr. Blackfoot called at the Ludy drug store for an anodyne which she used on such occasions. Although

he had previously met Miss Ludy at the house of a friend, and also frequently on the street, as he passed their place of business daily in going to his own office, yet never before had he seen her when she presented such an untidy appearance, with her hair disheveled, dress dirty, and her entire make up slatternly in the extreme. But what disgusted him more than her lack of neat attire, was the fact that she was dealing out the drinks to a set of second class toppers, who had not yet quite reached the point of regular saloon or doggery customers. She was so busily engaged that she did not notice Mr. Blackfoot's entrance, and the conversation going on between customers and clerk was not any more refined than was the general appearance of the latter to Mr. Blackfoot; for while he was a wholesale liquor dealer himself, it did not strike him as being the proper thing for a young lady to become a bar-tender in retailing it.

"Dod blast it! Bill," said John Wilder, "you've got to set 'em up this mornin'. I've been comin' down with the rocks all the week; and you scooped in Tom Hawkins' pile last night, so come down with the scabs now, old boy."

"All right, Jack," said Bill Turner, throwing down a ten dollar bill, "I *was* a durned lucky dog last night, though I ain't even with Tom yet. But I'll get there, and don't you forget it. There's nothin' wrong in beatin' the devil at his own game, is there, Miss Ludy?"

"Oh, no. Pa says its every one for himself in this world, and I guess he's about right. So, as you are in luck this morning, let me fill up your glasses again with some of our fine old Bourbon," she replied, wishing to retain as much of the ten dollar bill as possible for her

father's money drawer, before giving back the change.

"All right," said Turner, "give us a bumper, and tell the Governor when he gets up that you've taken in more scabs before breakfast than he'll take in before dinner."

After the young men had emptied their glasses, Miss Ludy laughingly passed the change over the counter, and said:

"Call again, gentlemen. We shall always be glad to have you divide your good luck with us; and the 'Governor, as you call my pa, will always keep the best drinks to be found in the market."

"Oh, certainly, Josie," said Sam Harter, as they all moved toward the door; "it's worth the price of the drinks to be waited on by you, so the old man can bet his bottom dollar on holding our custom."

Josie blushed slightly as Mr. Blackfoot stepped forward for the anodyne; not so much on account of the business she had just been engaged in, as that of her untidy appearance. All this transpired within a few moments of time, but Mr. Blackfoot had been given an unintentional revelation of Josie's true character.

"Can it be possible," thought he, as he hastily walked homeward, "that Richard is such a blind fool as not to see the coarseness of this girl's character? Only yesterday he had her out riding again. I shall tell him this very day what I have seen and heard this morning."

On entering his wife's room, she noticed the troubled expression that clouded his face, and anxiously said:

"What is it, dear? Something is troubling you. Has Richard been displeasing you again? He certainly has learned nothing of the will."

"Yes, Rebecca, Richard is displeasing me; he is making a most consummate fool of himself, and compromising us by his open attentions to that Miss Ludy."

He then related what he had just seen and heard at the drug store.

"Surely," said Mrs. Blackfoot, "Richard can have no serious intentions with reference to Josie Ludy. She is too low for him. My aunt, Mrs. Munson, knew them well at Kingston. She says Mr. Ludy was formerly wealthy, having heired quite a fortune through his wife, whose father was vastly rich; but through his own profligate and dissipated habits, he had squandered the greater part of his wife's estate. He would frequently leave his business for weeks at a time, and his wife and daughters were compelled to manage the store as best they could. His wife's health finally failed, from care and over-work, and six months ago she died, leaving Mr. Ludy so nearly helpless that, under his financial embarrassment, he was compelled to exchange his large drug house in Kingston for this small store here. And it is said that not only Mr. Ludy, but his daughters also, are better judges of drinks than of drugs."

"Then," said Mr. Blackfoot, "this girl and her sisters have grown up with but limited social or educational advantages, and she expects her pretty face to atone for all these deficiencies."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Blackfoot, "this seems to be the case, and I hope you will spare no effort with Richard to prevent any further intimacy with this girl. Tell him that I should never feel like giving her a welcome to our home."

"I shall call at Richard's office," said Mr. Blackfoot, "as I go to the store this morning, and open his eyes

on this subject. He must be shown what a fool he is making of himself."

Richard was in his office earlier than usual that morning. He had just received his last medical journal, and was much interested in a discussion on surgery, the first chapter of which had been given in a previous number. As there had not many pleasant words passed between himself and father for some weeks past, he was rather annoyed at this interruption. So, noting the look of displeasure on his father's face, betokening a coming storm, he said:

"What's the trouble with you, now? Have some of the clerks been stealing again? You look as if you had lost your last friend."

"Trouble enough, Richard, when my son is constantly disgracing his parents by giving his open attentions to such a low lout as that Josie Ludy. Why, she is nothing but a bar-tender, and your mother has just told me this morning of her low origin."

He had intended to tell his son what he had seen and heard at the drug store that morning; and had he kindly done so, instead of quoting his wife's opinion in reference to Josie, his object would probably have been accomplished. But the mention of his step-mother fired Richard's anger at once, and he hotly replied:

"Father, you can just tell that woman whom you call wife, but whom I shall never call mother, that if she will be so kind as to attend to her own business, I shall attend to mine; for since I am nearly as old as she is, I think I can make my own selection of the society that will be most congenial to me. And if I could not, I should certainly never stoop to ask *her* advice as to

what ladies I shall call on, or whom I shall invite to ride with me."

"Nor mine either, I suppose you might have added," said his father.

"Nor yours either, sir, in such matters as this," was the quick retort.

"Well, sir, since you have determined to go to the dogs, and refuse to heed my advice, you will have no one to blame but yourself for the consequences of your blind folly."

The chasm between father and son had been gradually widening since Richard's first college year, and now the point of reconciliation seemed to be forever past. He sat for a long time musing after his father left him.

CHAPTER VII.

A HASTY MARRIAGE.

Mr. Norton had been so much elated over his sister's prospects, and his own incidentally through her's, that he told a few of his friends very confidentially how matters had been arranged in the will. These in turn told their very confidential friends in a similar manner, and thus it was passed from friend to friend, until it reached Richard's ears a fortnight before the interview referred to in the preceding chapter.

"Curse that scheming woman," growled Richard, "she is not content with robbing me, but now attempts to stab Josie in the dark. Well, Josie is not the kind of a girl I shall select for a wife, but I pity her and shall now show that she-devil how much I care for her advice. As I promised to leave an anodyne with Mrs. Page this morning, I shall drive past the drug store and ask Miss Ludy to take a ride with me this afternoon."

Josie was so deeply mortified by Mr. Blackfoot's scrutinizing gaze at her untidy appearance that morning that she determined never again to be caught in such a slatternly plight, and had taken extra pains in arranging her hair, and complete attire, as soon as her father could come in to take charge of the store. So when young Dr. Blackfoot entered, she presented a more fascinating appearance to him than ever before. It is needless to say that she accepted his invitation for an afternoon ride. His father's uncomplimentary remarks

with reference to Josie awakened his curiosity to learn more of her true character and history; so while they were slowly riding over a rough place on the outskirts of the city, he said :

“Miss Ludy, how do you like mercantile business? I see you help your father frequently in the drug store.”

Josie blushed deeply as she thought of the kind of help Mr. Blackfoot had found her rendering that morning, and so stammered out :

“I am not sure what you mean, but must say that there are some parts of the drug business that I do not like at all. But then you know competition is so close and sharp in our line, that we have to resort to all fair means to hold our trade. Do you think it improper for a young lady to help her father in the mercantile business?”

“Why, no, Miss Ludy, I don’t see why it should be in your line, although I have not been accustomed to such things. My father has always ridiculed the idea of ladies clerking in a store; but then as he has always been engaged in the liquor business, I sometimes think that the very nature of the business has given him a coarser view of mercantile life than he otherwise would have had.”

“I have thought, Doctor, that your father was rather unsocial, and perhaps this accounts for it. I have felt also that he objects to your being seen in my company. Am I mistaken, Doctor?”

“He objects to almost everything that I do, Miss Ludy; but I think that scheming step-mother of mine is at the bottom of all the trouble, and so long as we are satisfied with each other’s company I shall pay but little attention to their wishes in the matter.”

Josie's heart gave a great throb of delight as she listened to Richard's last words, for while she had at first been attracted by his prospective wealth, she was now conscious of a deeper feeling springing up in her heart for the young Doctor. And fearing that his father would, if he had not already given his description of the scene in the drug store that morning, she determined to place herself in as fair a light as possible, knowing that the true state of her father's affairs, and the character of his drug store, would probably be discovered soon by Richard. So blushing deeply, she said :

“ I know your father must have thought me a fright this morning; but my papa's health having been poor ever since mother died, I have to open the store while he takes his morning nap, and sometimes our customers call so early that I have no time to arrange my toilet. Then, as we cannot afford to lose any of our trade, even though a part of it does come from those who may, at times, indulge too freely in stimulants, you can see the position this necessarily places us in. If we were wealthy, as we once were, I should not be under the necessity of doing such things, and I hope your father and step-mother will not be too hard on me for what I cannot help.”

Josie could not have selected better words for striking a responsive chord in Richard's heart than those with which she closed her plea. As the setting sun threw a clear, soft light over her features, revealing the blushes brought there, partly through mingled joy and fear, Richard thought he had never seen her looking so lovely, and having inherited much of his father's quick, impulsive nature, he did what many others have done,

without giving a thought to the importance of the step taken, and said :

“Josie, I don’t care a straw for what my father and step-mother think of you or myself, if I can feel sure of your confidence and love. Josie, will you be my wife?”

“Oh, Richard, are you in earnest? Do you really mean what you say?”

In looking down into the blushing girl’s eyes he saw there was no danger of a refusal, so replied :

“Yes, Josie, every word of it, and if you say so, we will drive right to the Clerk’s office for the necessary papers, and will go home as man and wife.”

“O! won’t that be too romantic for anything?” said she. “Yes, Richard, I shall be proud of the position you can give me as your wife, and I am ready for this happy episode now, if you are.”

Thus was the most important step in life taken by both, with scarcely a thought of the serious consequences involved. He, under the passing fancy that, as she was a handsome woman, he could probably be as happy with her as any one; and then he wished to promptly show his contempt, not only for his step-mother, but also for his father’s choice in the matter; while she was delighted with the thought that she was securing a proud position in society, with a man that she could probably love as well as any one with whom she had yet met.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH BY SLOW POISONING.

TEN years have passed over the heads of Dr. Blackfoot and wife since the occurrences mentioned in the preceding chapter, and yet no reconciliation between father and son has been effected. The young Doctor had found it difficult to work into remunerative practice in a large city, where there were so many older and well established physicians. Much of his practice had been amongst those contemptible specimens of humanity who infest all localities, and who impose on new doctors and merchants by getting in debt to them as deeply as possible, with no intention of ever paying a dollar of honest accounts.

As some of these customers had made great pretensions as reformers and temperance workers, they had been able to impose on the young Doctor's credulity to a greater extent than they otherwise could have done. This caused him to hate all real reformers, and he resolved to ally himself with what he called "respectable saloonists and free thinkers".

As his father-in-law had lost, not only his property, but his health, and his standing as a business man, through dissipation, Richard took charge of what little stock was left, and opened a "drug store" in name, but a saloon in fact, in his own office, and gave Mr. Ludy a clerk's position, as he was now dependent on his children for support. This position he held but a short time, as

his habits of dissipation brought on an attack of delirium tremens, which closed his earthly career. His two younger daughters had married saloon-keepers and were far from being happily situated in life: the older of the two dying from abuse and neglect, and leaving three worse than orphan children to be cast adrift on the cold charities of the world.

About this time, old Mr. Blackfoot began relenting toward his son, and resolved to make some advances toward a reconciliation, by presenting to Richard a valuable piece of property and five thousand dollars in cash. To this his wife readily assented, but at heart she bitterly protested against it, as she feared it might be the beginning of a complete reconciliation between father and son, which would probably result in the transfer of much more valuable property.

A short time after this transaction with his son, Mr. Blackfoot's health began failing rapidly.

With the best medical counsel Richard could procure in the city, they seemed powerless to check the progress of the disease. In fact, there seemed to be a mystery about the case from the start, which they were unable to fathom.

As the disease progressed, Mr. Blackfoot became very uneasy, and one day when his wife and Bridget McCarthy, one of their servants, were alone with him, he said: "Rebecca, I am feeling badly and may not be able to talk much more, and I am not satisfied with the way I have treated Richard. I know my will is not just as it should be, and I should like to talk with you and Richard together over these matters, for I wish to make some changes in my will, as I shall feel better

with the assurance that you and Richard will get along pleasantly when I am gone."

This was the very thing feared more than all else, by Mrs. Blackfoot, but knowing her husband's determined, inflexible will, she thought best to seemingly assent to all he said, but with an inward determination to prevent any such action, she replied: "Whatever you wish, dear, in this matter shall be done; but you are too ill now to attend to such business. Please try to rest now, and when you are feeling better we will have Richard come, and you and he can arrange all of this business as you wish, but you must not worry over such matters now."

"Well, Rebecca, I'll wait until to-morrow, if you think best; and if I am no better by that time, we will have Richard come and we will talk this business over together, so there will be a clear understanding between you as to how I wish these matters arranged."

"Very well, dear, but you need rest and sleep now, and it is time for you to take another dose of medicine."

After this dose was administered, Mr. Blackfoot soon fell into a troubled sleep, from which he never fully awakened to consciousness, and death ensued three days afterward.

Richard spent the most of his time at his father's bedside during the last three days of his life, although his step-mother insisted on giving the medicine whenever Dr. Johnson, the physician who had the case in charge, was not present.

The day before Mr. Blackfoot died, as Dr. Johnson was about administering a dose of sweet spirits of nitre, he halted after pouring it out in the spoon, tasted it, took it to the window, shook his head, put the bottle in

his pocket, took out another bottle from his medicine case, tasted it, after which he gave the dose out of the latter bottle.

On going back to his office, he analyzed the contents of the bottle labeled "Sweet Spirits of Nitre," and detected a considerable quantity of a well known deadly poison in it. He called again in the afternoon, but no material change was apparent in his patient.

How the poison got into the nitre was a mystery to him. "Could it have been a mistake of the druggist?" If there had been much of the contents of that bottle administered, he could now readily understand the cause of the peculiar symptoms in this case.

He knew there had been a bitter feeling between Richard and his father for years, but dared not accuse him of such a dastardly crime as that of slowly poisoning his father in this manner. That there were strong indications of slow poisoning in this case, he could no longer doubt.

But what could he do? It was a dangerous move to accuse Richard of this, for if he should prove his innocence there was strong probability that he would turn the tables on him and prosecute him for slander and malpractice beside.

If Rebecca Blackfoot were the guilty party, how could he prove it? She would have wealth and friends in plenty for defense. He was in a fearful dilemma, and was utterly at a loss to know what course to pursue. He determined, however, to make a careful record of all suspicious points that he discovered in the case, and file away with his private papers for future reference in case any new evidence should be developed.

Richard also had his suspicions aroused by certain movements that he had at times noticed, between his step-mother and her brother, Mr. Norton; but as Dr. Johnson had said nothing about what he had discovered, and as there was nothing definite that he could prove, he thought best to keep his fears to himself, since he now saw clearly that his father could not survive many hours.

He left the sick-room for a few minutes, and went down to the medicine closet, he hardly knew why; but he noticed that Bridget was watching him closely.

In looking through the medicine bottles, he saw one labeled with the name of the deadly poison it contained, but this bottle was nearly empty.

"Bridget," said he, "What has this medicine been used for?"

"Troth, an' Oi cannot tell yez, at all at all, phwat ony av the bottles are good for. Oi am no docthor in-toirly."

"I didn't ask you what it was good for, but what it had been used for."

"Midical purposes, Oi suppose, sorr," was the ready reply. This led Richard to believe that she knew more than she was ready to tell, and he determined to work into her good graces if possible; but then was not the time.

He put the bottle in his pocket and went over to his office to leave word with his family that he should not be at home again before morning, and while there he locked the bottle containing the poison in his private drawer. Hastening back, he remained at his father's bedside untill death closed the scene at six o'clock the following morning.

The funeral occurred two days after, and was conducted much as the funerals of rich men generally are ; but the widow and her brother, Mr. Norton, appeared to be the chief mourners.

CHAPTER IX.

A FEARFUL RETRIBUTION.

NOT long after the funeral, complications so perplexing came up, that Mrs. Blackfoot was soon convinced of her inability to manage the large business in which her husband had been engaged; so she determined to close out the entire stock to the highest bidder, and convert everything into cash. She also placed all of her real estate (except the residence property which she and her brother occupied) in the hands of real estate agents for sale; thus before she had been three months a widow, her means were mostly converted into cash and bank stock.

Then followed a long, expensive and fruitless lawsuit, under Richard's efforts to break the will. Failing in this, he determined, if possible, to learn what Bridget McCarthy knew about that bottle of poison. So he had Molly, his wife's servant girl, to often invite Bridget to spend her evenings at his house; and by allowing several other Irish servant girls, with their beaux, to occupy his dining room of evenings, it became a favorite resort for her, and she soon felt as much at home in Dr. Blackfoot's dining room as she ever had in that of the old gentleman, his father. He frequently made her nice but inexpensive presents; but months passed before he could succeed far enough in gaining her confidence to get any revelations on the points desired.

One evening, after she had indulged quite freely in the cheap drinks he had furnished his Irish dining room party, he took her into his office just before the party dispersed, under a pretense of wishing to send some word to her mistress. Taking out the bottle containing the poison, and handing it to her, he said :

“Bridget, can you tell me anything about this bottle.”

“Yis, sorr, I seed yez take that bottle out o’ me Missus’ medicine closet, jist beyant the day yer father doied.”

“How do you know, Bridget, that this is the same bottle?”

“Because me Missus towld me she wud gev me tin dollars ef I wud always put thra dhrops o’ that in Mr. Blackfoot’s coffee, as he was gettin’ owld and naded a stimulant; but she towld me to be keerful and not put it in her’s, nor any one elses. So I put that cross mar-ruck on it to make sure ave no mistakes.”

“Did you always put three drops of this medicine in my father’s coffee?”

“Yis, and sometimes more, for I wud not be afther stintin’ the owld jintleman in a little thing loike that.”

“But did you not know, Bridget, that this is a deadly poison?”

“*Poison, Doctor? No.* By all the holy saints, I thocht it wud be good fer his stomach. She niver towld me it was poison, at all at all. An’ its meself that was innocent as an unborrn babe, of wantin’ to mur-ther your father, it is.”

“Well, Bridget, you must remember all these things, for I shall want you to testify in court on all these points. But say nothing to your mistress about any-

thing we have been talking of, or you may get into trouble. Some one will go behind the bars for this yet."

Richard's last words had not been well chosen, for they alarmed Bridget, and soon after returning home, Mrs. Blackfoot noticed something wrong with her servant.

"What troubles you, Bridget?" said she; "you look as if you had lost all your friends."

"Ow, Mrs. Blackfoot, that the loikes of me should go to the pinatintuary fer murtherin' me masther, whin I didn't know it was poison at all that I was puttin' in his coffee for wakes and wakes before he doied."

"Hush, Bridget, it's no such thing," said Mrs. Blackfoot. "Who says so?"

Mrs. Blackfoot was now thoroughly alarmed, and after bolting the dining room door and having Bridget close all the window shutters, she called her servant to a chair by her side, and said:

"Now, Bridget, you must tell me all about this, for you know I am your friend, and I fear some one is bent on giving you trouble. Who says you poisoned my husband? Did Richard say anything to you about it?"

"Yis, an' he says its mesilf that shall go intill the coort an' tell all I know about the poison."

"Didn't I tell you, Bridget, to say nothing to any one about the medicine? And here you have been talking to Richard about it."

"Ow, Mrs. Blackfoot, he says I kilt his father with that medicine ye towld me to put in his coffee; an' he says some one will have to go behind the prison bars for this yet. An' Saint Pathrick himself knows I

wouldn't ha' done it for the wurruld ef I had known it was poison."

Mrs. Blackfoot knew her only hope now was, either to get Bridget out of the way, or to keep her so completely terrified that she would not dare to testify to what she knew. So she sent her to her room, saying: "I'll tell you in the morning what to do."

It was long after midnight when she and her brother, Ezra, retired that night. But the conclusion arrived at was to make Bridget believe this was a trick of Richard's to get her into trouble. They feared that sending her away would only strengthen the evidence against them, and she would probably in time be found anyway. So the next morning Mrs. Blackfoot told her servant that the only way she could keep out of trouble with Richard, was to refuse to say a word to him or any one else about the matter.

"If you answer no questions from any one, nor speak to any one about this, you will have no trouble, Bridget."

"Be the powers, its Bridget McCarthy that kin kape any sacret ye would be afther askin' me to, an' sure."

So when Richard met her on the street a few days after this, and told her he wished to see her again soon, alone, she quickly revealed the fact to him that he could not rely on her for any evidence in the case; and, as he had no other clew, he was at a loss what course to pursue. He was comparatively poor, and his step-mother could command her hundreds of thousands. He had been badly worsted in one lawsuit with her, and he did not care to enter another without all the necessary fortifications for success. A new, but diabolical thought, now struck him. "Bridget has been hired to put poison in my father's coffee, and possibly she could be hired

to put it in another person's." But to carry out this scheme, he must have one other accomplice. He knew that Ed. O'Leary was waiting on Bridget; but as he had no property, she was in no hurry to marry him. So calling Ed. into his private office that evening, he said to him:

"Ed., how would you like to be a rich man inside of six months?"

"Be gorry, Docthor, an' its nothing I wad loike bether."

"Well, Ed., if you can keep a secret, and help me out with a little job I have on hand, I'll give you two thousand dollars. That's a thousand each for you and Bridget."

"Troth, Docthor, an' I'll go 'till the ind of the earth for yez, for spakin' thim good worruds 'till Bridget last wake for me; an' its Ed. O'Leary that kin kape all the sacrets in the wurruld, for half the money."

Richard then told Ed. that he now had proof that his step-mother had slowly poisoned his father, but that the evidence was of such a character he could not rely on it in a suit for conviction. He said she ought to be hung, but as he doubted the possibility of a conviction under the circumstances, his plan was to take a short cut for justice.

"Now, Ed.," said Richard, "that she-devil over yonder intends to swear that Bridget willfully and maliciously poisoned my father, by putting poison out of this very bottle into his coffee, and by this means shield herself. She has plenty of money and friends that will help her prove it, if the case ever comes to a trial; and I think she, with her brother, Ezra Norton,

and her attorney, are slowly working up the case, as they have frequently been seen in close consultation of late. Now, I wish to save Bridget, and so do you. And the only way I see to do it is to get that black-hearted she-devil out of the way as soon as possible."

"Be the powers, Docthor, yez wouldn't have me to go an' murther her, would yez?"

"O, no, Ed., not that way. If Bridget will just put three or four drops out of this into her coffee every day, she will just get sick and die; and as she has to die some time, it is just as well for her to die before she gets Bridget into trouble."

This was a far more dangerous undertaking than O'Leary had dreamed of, and if it had not been for the *adroit* manner in which Dr. Blackfoot depicted Bridget's danger, he would have shrunk from it with horror. But he would risk anything to save her; so he promptly accepted the part that the Doctor wished him to play in the tragedy. The result was as Richard planned it should be. Six weeks later, Mrs. Blackfoot's remains were placed in the cemetery by the side of her husband, who had, from the same cause, been carried there less than twelve months before. Both she and Mr. Blackfoot had made wealth and power the idols of their ambition. They had lived selfish, Godless lives, and their lamps had gone out in darkness and utter gloom. They died, worshipping the very idols that had been the instigation of their deaths. A sad commentary on avaricious lives, spent only for worldly gain and position.

CHAPTER X.

A RECKLESS SPECULATOR.

SOON after the death of Mr. Blackfoot, Dr. Johnson, who had had charge of his case, was fatally injured in a railway collision in Western New York, and was not able to be removed from the hospital, where he and the other wounded passengers had been cared for after the wreck. Knowing that he could only live a few days at most, he sent for Mr. Newman Clark, his attorney, for the purpose of having his business affairs more satisfactorily arranged. After all other matters had been adjusted, he said:

“Mr. Clark, there is one other matter that I have been watching ever since Mr. Blackfoot died, and you will find some written statements in reference to it, in the drawer with my other private papers. If there should ever be any developments that can throw any light on the subject, those papers may be of some value in the case. I am sure a dark crime has been committed in the Blackfoot mansion, but who the guilt rests upon, I have never been able to discover. Yet I believe that God, who says, “Though hand join in hand, yet the wicked shall not go unpunished,” will, in his own good time, bring the guilty parties to the bar of justice.”

* * * * *

A few days before Mrs. Blackfoot's death, Ezra Norton, seeing the grave look on the face of Dr. Suth-

erland, the attending physician, followed him down to the hall below, and said :

“ Doctor, what do you think of my sister’s case? She suffered such terrible paroxysms with her stomach last night that I became alarmed. Do you think there is any danger that she will not recover?”

“ I shall be frank with you, Mr. Norton,” said the Doctor ; “ I fear there is but little chance for her. There seems to be something working against the medicine that I can’t understand ; and unless I can get it to take the effect I desire within the next forty-eight hours, there can be no hope for her recovery. Dr. Blackfoot is a well read man, and as he is her step-son, perhaps we had better call him for counsel in the case.”

“ No, never,” said Norton, “ he and my sister bitterly hate each other, and his very presence would make her worse.”

This struck Dr. Sutherland as being rather strange, but seeming to take no notice of it, he replied :

“ Well, then, I shall call Dr. Banks in counsel with me this afternoon, as there is now no time to lose ; and while I do not wish to alarm you or your sister, I would advise you to make preparations for the worst, for I think fatal results may be looked for in her case soon.”

On going back to his sister’s sick room, Ezra said :

“ Rebecca, the Doctor says you are very sick, and although no fatal results can be looked for soon, yet he thinks it prudent to have all your business affairs properly adjusted while you are able to give such directions as you desire should be carried out, in case anything serious should happen. Dr. Banks will call with him this afternoon to see you, and I have been thinking it would be better for our business matters to be some-

what differently arranged in the meantime ; for in case of your sudden death, Dick Blackfoot would get the lion's share of your estate, the way matters now stand."

"Oh, you need not be alarmed, Ezra, I feel better this morning and I shall soon be all right again. But, of course, we never know what might happen to any of us, so it will be as well for us to make matters safe. I will give you checks for my deposits in the First and Third National Banks, and will transfer all my stocks and bonds to you to-day ; and if I am not better within a week or two, I will deed what real estate I have left, to you, for Dick Blackfoot shall never get a dollar of it, if I can prevent it. But if I get well, of course you will transfer as much of my property back to me as I shall need."

Ezra knew that the cash, bonds and bank stock, now constituted the principal part of her property, so he readily approved of his sister's proposition.

"I think, Rebecca," said he, "your plan is a wise one ; and should you recover, every dollar shall be transferred back to you, if you wish it."

Thus, it was so arranged that the great bulk of the Blackfoot estate was forever placed beyond the reach of Richard.

Ezra Norton had been furnished with money by his sister, whenever he wished to make investments. In some of his ventures he had been successful ; but as he had never had any business training, his speculations generally resulted in heavy losses. He now, since coming into possession of his sister's estate, determined to become a millionaire, and bought stocks largely on the New York market. His first ventures proving re-

munerative, making him \$30,000 in sixty days, he re-invested every available dollar, including all that he could borrow, in the very worst stocks on the market. His weakness for fast horses, wine and women, had been growing on him rapidly since he had been supplied with ready money; so there was now but little of the time that his head was clear enough to attend to business with any degree of sagacity. His agent in New York telegraphed him for authority to close out his deal if he could not come to the city immediately, but fearing that he might delay any action for days if any horse race was on hand, he wrote him, in addition to the telegram, that his stocks were falling rapidly, and the only chance to save anything was to close out for what he could get. Norton coolly wrote his agent in reply to both the telegram and letter, "to keep cool and not be alarmed;" adding,

"When I want the deal closed, I'll let you know. I am going to attend the races at Syracuse to-morrow, and if nothing prevents, I shall be in the city by the last of the week."

After the races were over, he was so completely under the influence of wine for two days that he had forgotten all about his New York business; and it is doubtful when he would have thought of it again, if he had not received another telegram from his agent, urging him to come immediately to the city. He was now sufficiently sober to realize that he had recklessly neglected his business, and looking over the morning paper, saw that his stocks were quoted low enough to ruin him. He took the first train to the city, but all he could do was to sell his stocks for what they would bring. And as he had

borrowed so largely in making his last purchases, the reckless deal had left him hopelessly bankrupt. He now began drinking harder than ever, and six months after his sister's death, he was killed in a drunken row, and was buried as a common pauper in the potter's field. Thus did the apples of sin so quickly turn to the ashes of Sodom, on the very lips of the devotee of vice.

CHAPTER XI.

PRE-NATAL INFLUENCE.

“Spare this one treasure—
Take all else I have, O death.”

THERE was but little left of the Blackfoot estate at the time Mrs. Blackfoot died, that she had not transferred to her brother, except the old home and some other residence property. This real estate Richard now took possession of without opposition. He also had his attorney take steps for recovering at least a part of what had been transferred to Mr. Norton by his step-mother. But this was soon found to be a hopeless undertaking, as Norton had retained the best legal talent for defense in case of such an emergency; and before anything definite could be done, the whole of it had been squandered through Norton's stock-gambling and horse racing.

The associations of the old homestead had been so fraught with bitterness to Richard for many years past, that he determined to sell it, with all of the other residence property, and leave Albany. But there are other points of interest in Dr. Blackfoot's family, that the reader should understand before we follow them to their western home in Caddo. He and Josie had “hastily married,” and, as is generally the case under such circumstances, “leisurely repented” of their folly. While she really had some affection for him, she soon discovered that he had married her chiefly to spite his

father and step-mother, instead of from those finer feelings of the soul which cause a man to shield, cherish and idolize the object of his highest earthly affections. A separation would have taken place before the close of the first year of their married life, had it not been for the arrival of a sweet babe, which formed a new and binding link between them. There was one thing, however, on which they were in perfect harmony, and that was the accumulation of money; and they had no scruples as to how it was obtained, provided they kept out of the clutches of the law. Any advantage they could take of the ignorance of those with whom they had dealings, was considered perfectly legitimate. Having been so largely cut out of their father's estate, they determined to make *money* the goal of their ambition, and if possible to surpass the old gentleman in wealth.

About two years after the birth of their first born, another babe came into their home. While they had no warm affection for each other, yet they displayed more than ordinary parental love for their offspring—Archie and Belle, as they called them. When Belle, their second child, was a year old, Mrs. Cary, of Rochester, a sister to Richard's mother, came to spend a few weeks with them. She, like her sister, Mrs. Blackfoot, had always lived a devoted Christian life. While both her nephew and his wife loved her for her many amiable and affectionate ways, and especially her passionate fondness for their children, yet they had no appreciation of her Christian graces, and could not understand why she was at times so sad and tearful when talking of their children. She had only intended to spend a few weeks with them, and was about taking her departure at the end of the second month, when Archi-

bald was taken quite sick, and they begged her to remain a few days longer with them. This she the more readily consented to do, as she had not only lost her husband, but also her only child, and the mother heart in her was touched with a tender sympathy that only a bereaved mother can feel.

“Yes, Josie,” said she, “I will remain until there is a change, for I love Archie almost as my own child, and I fear he is going to be very sick.”

Her predictions proved true. Both her husband and son had died with typhoid fever, and she was not slow in detecting the character of the disease now entering her nephew's family. Archie had been permitted to spend much of his time in the store and on the street, and as a consequence had heard a great deal of obscene and profane language. Although he seldom used such words when well, yet in his delirium from the fever he was almost constantly uttering the most horrid oaths and the most shamefully indecent language. As he grew worse and weaker, it was seldom that a decent expression passed his lips. Nearly three weeks of raging fever had reduced the little victim almost to a skeleton, and he could scarcely speak above a whisper. All hope of his recovery was rapidly dying out of the hearts of the sad father, mother and aunt, who were watching by the bedside of the little sufferer. The shades of night were gathering over the city, and thick darkness and gloom over this sad household. The stricken parents now felt, as never before, how utterly helpless they were in the presence of death.

It had been some hours since they had heard any articulate utterance from their suffering child, and they felt that the end was near. Mrs. Downing, a sympa-

thizing friend, had called to inquire after the condition of the child, and the Aunt had momentarily left the room to bear the sad, hopeless news: "I do not think he can live through the night, Mrs. Downing. He has not known any of us for the past two days."

"Oh, dear! Mrs. Cary, what will they do if they lose little Archie? Their whole souls are bound up in that child, and it will almost kill them to give him up."

"Yes," said Mrs. Cary, "and I much fear the consequences for her. She has never known the consolations of religion, and her whole being rebels against the bitter ordeal through which she is called to pass. Oh! that she could only be led to that great Physician, from whom all help must come in such sad hours as this."

"Let us hope, Mrs. Cary, that this is God's way of bringing the parents nearer to Himself."

"I do hope so, Mrs. Downing, and I have asked Him to help me lead them into the light of His love and favor, so that when the hardest blow shall come, it may soften their hearts toward the Hand that gives, and takes from us, those things which His infinite wisdom sees will work for our good."

Mrs. Cary's prayer had in part been answered in a way she had not looked for, as in fact our prayers many times are. The first night she had spent in her nephew's family, little Archie asked to "sleep with Auntie." So, before putting him to bed, she had quite a long talk with him about the children's Friend, who said: "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." She taught him the comforting sweetness of committing himself to the care of that loving Friend before closing his eyes in slumber,

and had him repeat with her that beautiful child's prayer : "Now I lay me down to sleep."

While Mrs. Cary was talking with Mrs. Downing in the parlor, the anxious watchers were bending over their first-born with the keenest agony they had yet felt; for, soon after she had left the sick room, a convulsive shudder came over the child, and as this passed off it seemed to them their darling was dead, he lay so still.

Richard was about to call his Aunt, when they caught the low, whispered words from the child's lips :

"Now—I—lay me—"

"What is it, darling," said Mrs. Blackfoot, as she bent still nearer the child.

"Down—to—sleep," came the faintly whispered words.

The father was about putting a wet sponge to his lips, when the slowly faltering whispers came :

"I pray—the—Lord—my soul—to keep."

"Tell mamma what you want, dear. Mamma is here," sobbed the mother.

As if unconscious of the fact that he had been spoken to, the child's feeble whispers came :

"If I—should—die—before—I wake, I pray—the Lord—my soul—to—take."

"Oh! Archie! Archie! Mamma's darling, *must* not die," sobbed the stricken mother, while the tears came rolling thick and fast over Richard's manly cheeks, as he remembered now that long forgotten prayer, learned in his early childhood days at his Christian mother's knee. Mrs. Cary had returned in time to catch the last words of the little child's prayer, and she, with Richard, now

felt that Archie's last words had been uttered. Another slight struggle, and then the child was still.

Was life extinct? The mother and Mrs. Cary thought so, and in a few moments Mrs. Blackfoot suffered herself to be led from the room by her sympathizing Aunt.

"Josie," said she, as she kneeled by the lounge on which the sorrowing mother fell sobbing, "the God of pity and love only can help and comfort us in such sad afflictions as this. Let us go to Him for help."

"Oh! Aunt, there is no God of pity and love, as you say, or He would not take my darling boy from me."

"Don't you believe that I pity and love you, Josie?"

"Oh! yes, dear Aunt, you have proved a thousand times and ways, by your sleepless, watchful, anxious care with me for my darling, that you love and pity me. But God does not, or He would not take him from me, now that I love him so much."

"I have watched with you, Josie, for a few short weeks only, while God has watched over you and me, with an unslumbering eye, all our lives; and when He takes our earthly treasures from us, He only wishes to draw us still nearer to Himself, where he designs that the great future of our existence shall be spent."

"Oh! Aunt, if he could only have been spared to me until manhood. It is so hard to give him up now."

"Did you ever ask your Heavenly Father to spare your darling, Josie? Do you ever go to Him with your sorrows and cares?"

"No, Aunt, I never prayed. I can't. The future all looks dark to me. If there is a God, he would not hear such a wretch as I have always been."

"Josie, you must not forget the words of our loving Savior: *Whosoever* cometh unto me, I will *in no wise*

cast out.' And, again : ' God *so loved* the world, that He gave His *only Son* that *whosoever* believeth in him *should not* perish, but have everlasting *life*.' Josie, could you possibly love Archie more than God loved Jesus, *His only Son* ? ”

“ Oh ! Aunt, I never saw it in this light before. I wish I had always been with you, for I am sure I should have been a different woman, had such clear teaching been given me earlier in life ; but I fear it is too late. ”

“ Auntie,” called Richard from the parlor door, “ Archie has revived again and calls for you. ”

Both ladies hurried back with lightest footfalls to the bedside of the little sufferer with a new born hope that his life might yet be spared.

“ Auntie—Auntie,” faintly whispered Archie.

“ Here is Auntie and mamma dear,” said his mother, “ What is it, darling ? ”

“ Auntie—it is—dark—now ; say—‘ Now I—lay me ’—Auntie, and—tell papa—and mamma—too—how to say—‘ I pray—the—Lord—my soul—to keep. ’ ”

This unexpected call to her from the little sufferer, to lead the sorrow stricken parents to the Compassionate One, she dared not disregard. So, reverently and fervently, as only a loving Christian *mother* can, she poured forth from the fullness of her trusting heart such a petition to Him who noteth even the fall of a sparrow, that heaven itself seemed near ; for it seemed as if she had literally taken hold of the very hand of the Almighty, and asked, for the sake of Him who suffered in the garden and on the cross, that if it be possible this bitter cup might be removed from Richard and Josie’s lips, and their darling’s life be spared. She

closed with the meek, submissive words: "Yet not our will, but Thine, O, God, be done."

At the close of this prayer the child seemed to drop into the first quiet, natural sleep that they had noticed for more than two weeks, and the Doctor, watching him closely for a few minutes, said:

"I believe there are favorable symptoms. See, Auntie, he is breathing easier."

"Oh, Aunt!" said Josie, "if he is yet spared to us, I shall believe your God is a loving Father and that He does hear and answer prayer."

"I trust Josie, that every lesson in life will lead you more fully into the realization of this fact. I know it was hard for me to learn this lesson, and never until He had taken every idol from me, did I fully learn it. But thanks be to God who hath given me the victory, I can now say with one of old, who was deeply bereft: 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.'

"Oh! that we could always remember, in every trial, however bitter, that Jesus invites us to come boldly, yet trustingly to Him with our burdens. He is so kindly and tenderly sympathetic, for He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. In all our afflictions He is afflicted, and gladly gives joy for grief, to those who come trustingly to Him for aid in time of trouble."

For days, the child seemed to vibrate between life and death; but within a week the symptoms were much more favorable, and then the recovery was steady and rapid. But the loss of sleep, anxiety and care, had been too much for Mrs. Blackfoot, and when the recovery of her child seemed assured, her health and strength failed, and for days it seemed evident that she was taking the same fever with which her child had

been afflicted. She overheard her husband and Aunt talking in an adjoining room, with reference to her case, when they supposed her to be sleeping. But she was not, neither was she much disturbed by what they unintentionally revealed to her.

“Yes,” said he, “I fear it is the typhoid fever she is taking; and if it proves to be so, there is scarcely a hope for her, the condition she is now in. It may, though, be a fever of a milder type, and if so, she will probably be up again soon, with proper care and nursing. But, Aunt, I wish you could spend the most of your time with her for some months yet, if she recovers, for I am now fully convinced of the importance of prenatal influence, and you can help Josie so much in these delicate matters.”

“I fully appreciate the importance of what you have alluded to, Richard, and although I had intended to spend the coming fall and winter with friends in Ohio, yet I will talk with Josie, and if she, too, wishes me to remain with you, under the circumstances I think I shall do so.”

“Come sit by my bed, Aunt,” said Josie, as she entered her room soon after. “There are so many things I wish to talk to you about.”

“You must not talk much now, Josie; you are too weak; when you are stronger you may talk.”

“I know, Aunt, I am weak, but it will not hurt me to tell you what has been on my mind so many days. I now believe there is a God who cares for us. Your prayer for us and Archie has been answered; for no power but that of an infinite God could have given him back to us. And then you talked to Him and plead with Him just as I should have done with my mother, if she had

been holding my hands in her's and looking right down into my eyes, while I was pleading with her for some coveted present. I believed then He would answer such a prayer as that."

"And did you not know, Josie, that these were the only conditions on which God has promised to answer prayer? 'Without faith it is impossible to please Him,' and 'according to thy faith, so be it unto thee.' We can go to our Heavenly Father on these terms as trustingly as any child can to an earthly parent, for 'Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.' Have you never read these rich and beautiful promises in God's Word, Josie?"

"No, Aunt, I never read the Bible much. I always thought it was a dry book, that was gotten up more for priests and preachers than anything else. I never thought there was anything in it for me. But I do wish to learn the secret of your sweet temper and confiding trust, under all the trials you have had to pass through. Do you believe God would hear and answer my prayers? Oh! if I could only go to Him like you do, and talk to Him as a real and personal friend, I should feel so safe when trouble comes."

"'He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.' These are the precious words of Jesus, that I quoted to you, Josie, when Archie was so sick."

"Oh! Aunt, is that promise in God's Word?"

"Yes, Josie, it is full of such promises, and when you are stronger I will read some of them to you; but you had better not try to talk much more now."

"Well, Aunt, I shall never rest until I have read them for myself, for such promises must include me. And now I shall ask you to pray for me personally, for I know God will grant whatever you ask of Him."

“If we ask Him according to His will He heareth us, Josie; but you must also ask Him for yourself in this matter; for we must not only believe that He *is*, but that He is the rewarder of all those *who diligently seek Him*.”

Thus was Josie led lovingly into a Christian life, by the sweet influence of her Aunt, who had so long lived in the light of a Savior's love, that the highest joy of her life was found in leading others to Him.

The late summer, fall and winter months passed away, and with the opening buds of spring, the fairest flower of all was found nestling close to Josie's breast.

“Who does she look like, Mrs. Blackfoot?” said Mrs. Downing, who called three weeks later to see how the little stranger was getting along. “She don't look a bit like her papa, nor mamma either. Why, she is white as a lily, and her eyes blue as the sky.”

“She looks like my mother in her features,” said Richard, “but she has her Aunt Cary's eyes.”

“Yes,” said Josie, as she looked significantly toward her husband, “She is Aunt Cary's baby in more than one sense; for I heard what you said to Aunt about pre-natal influence, and I feel sure, Richard, that the lesson then taught by you, and since by Aunt, has not been lost; for baby is just as good as she can be, and, oh! isn't she pretty?”

“Let Auntie name her, papa, she is Auntie's baby.”

“Do you really wish me to name her, Josie?” said Mrs. Cary, “for if you do, I shall call her Eleanor, for Richard's mother, and you can call her Nora for short.”

“Thank you, Auntie,” said Richard, “if that suits Josie it pleases me.”

“Yes, Richard, we could not find a prettier name, and we will call her Nora. Oh! look, Auntie, she too is pleased with her name; see how she is smiling.” And although the child was only three weeks old, a sweet smile was playing over its little mouth and dimpled cheeks, while its blue eyes sparkled like diamonds.

When Nora was three months old, Mrs. Cary bade her nephew’s family a kind good-bye, and went to spend a year with her relatives in Ohio. But her health soon failed, and her sweet life closed on Thanksgiving day; but her angelic spirit entered into perfect life in “the great beyond,” where the Savior she had trusted and loved so well, had prepared her mansion.

As Dr. Blackfoot grew older, and the incidents connected with the death of his father and step-mother were burned into his life and conscience, he became more avaricious than ever. While he loved his children, he neglected those kindly attentions to his wife that every true woman justly craves from her husband.

How true the adage: “Love that comes not before marriage, comes never afterward.” Under this cold treatment, Mrs. Blackfoot suffered her hold on Christ to be broken; and as she, too, loved the “almighty dollar,” she soon fell in line with her husband on this point, and made her chief object in life the accumulation of wealth. When Nora was five years old, Kate, their youngest, was born.

While Dr. Blackfoot was well read, yet he never became a very successful physician; and, as previously stated, a combination of circumstances caused him, some years after, to leave Albany. We will now follow this family to their western home in Caddo.

CHAPTER XII.

PENURIOUSNESS, AND A DOCTOR'S FREE RIDE.

“Sorrow and silence are strong,
But patient endurance is God-like.”

GEORGE Hartley had been given the position of janitor at the high school in Caddo, by the trustees, and for his services as such was to receive fifteen dollars at the close of the term. But now that he had been so seriously hurt and disabled by the Doctor's vicious horse, his classmates performed this work for him by turns, Nora taking part of this service with the rest, although she had never been accustomed to such work, and she was delegated by the class to wait on the trustees and request them to pay the full amount of the janitor fees to George, which they cheerfully did when they learned how matters had been arranged.

It was five weeks after George had been hurt before he was able to walk to Main street; and the first trip he made over there, he met Dr. Blackfoot at the post-office, who addressed him thus:

“Well, George, you are able to be out again, I see. Getting along nicely, arn't you?”

“Yes, sir, I thank you, and I suppose you think it time for me to settle my bill with you for treatment. I have just drawn my pay for janitor work, and can perhaps settle as well to-day as any time.”

“Certainly, certainly, my lad; the best time to pay a debt is when you have the money. But under the cir-

cumstances I shall not charge you full rates, which would be about twenty-five dollars for such services. So, as you are paying it so promptly, I shall only charge you fifteen dollars."

George's heart sank within him, as he gave his last dollar to Dr. Blackfoot. For four months past he had been planning a pleasant surprise for his parents, when he should receive his pay for janitor services. He also thought he should have enough left besides to purchase some much needed books that he must have at the beginning of the next term to keep along with his class. As he slowly walked back homeward, in looking over their mail, he noticed the blue cross mark on his mother's magazine, indicating that the time for which it had been paid had expired. Intending that she should have received the magazine as a present from himself the ensuing year, he could not repress the tears when he thought of his destitute condition, and utter inability to even aid in procuring the books he so much needed. This may seem a small sum for even a boy to shed tears over, but to George Hartley it represented months of hard and dusty work; and it would have purchased the articles now so much needed and so highly prized by him.

It may be urged that this cannot be a true statement of facts; that no man *could* have taken the boy's hard earned money under such circumstances. Perhaps no *true* MAN could, but when the accumulation of wealth becomes the ruling passion of the soul, there is no depths of meanness too contemptible, no sordid act too devilish, for the votary of avarice to be guilty of, in order that he may gratify his accursed ambition. Dr. Blackfoot not only took the last dollar of the boy's hard

earned money, but afterward regretted that he had not made the bill larger, so that he could have had at least a small bill to hold against Mr. Hartley. He designed placing every man in Caddo and vicinity, if possible, under obligations to himself; and if he could not get doctor bills against them, would buy up notes or accounts whenever he could at a heavy discount. By this course Dr. Blackfoot secured an almost unlimited power over a large class of the citizens of Caddo; and while his power was felt and feared, he was most consummately hated by many whom he supposed were his friends. He also had a drug store on Main street, in which his son Archibald was head clerk. This store was rather peculiarly arranged. In addition to the usual prescription cases, he had a large room at the back end of the store, and a screen placed in front of the door entering it from the front room, over which were the significant words, "Sample and Pool Rooms." As time passed on, the Blackfoot drug store became quite a favorite resort for many young men, and even boys of the town and vicinity, the most of whom found business in the "Sample and Pool Rooms" before leaving the store. In fact, the Blackfoot drug store was practically a saloon, with pool and gambling room attachments.

But there are other characters in Caddo with whom the reader must become acquainted. Joshua Slathers, with his widowed mother, from Connecticut, had recently located on a small farm adjoining the town on the south. He was a tall, broad shouldered man, a bachelor of thirty, and devotedly attached to his mother. Although he was rough and uncouth in both language and costume, yet he was extremely kind hearted and ever ready to befriend the weak and helpless.

Tom Elliott, Fin Mincer and Jim Burton, were three of the leading "curbstone" politicians of Caddo, who spent much of their time in the Blackfoot "drug store," whenever their valuable services as goods-box whittlers around the other stores could be dispensed with.

Henry Hartley was an honest, intelligent, and energetic farmer, who had been one of the wealthiest citizens of Caddo, but through the kindness and generosity of his heart had endorsed largely for several of his neighbors, who, through bad management and unfortunate speculations, had failed, thus compelling him to assume the payment of their paper. These reverses stripped him of nearly everything except his beautiful farm, and on this he was compelled to place a heavy mortgage in order to meet the last note he had endorsed. Henry Hartley's farm joined Caddo on the west, and was well improved with rather elegant buildings; but as farm products were extremely low, it was only by closest economy that he could meet the semi-annual interest on his mortgage note, in addition to the daily expenses required to keep his family in the plainest necessities of life. But both he and his noble wife, Alice, were true Christians. Never in their darkest hours had they forgotten the Source from whence all their help must come, until the evening that George came home from the post office, the first time he had been able to take so long a walk after he had been hurt by the runaway horse. But the reader must here be told that Dr. Blackfoot had just purchased the note and mortgage which Mr. Hartley had given to Lawyer Benton for money to meet the notes of the parties for whom he had endorsed.

"Why don't you come to your supper, George?"

said his mother, when the other members of the family were seated around the table, for their plain evening meal. "Has your walk been too much for you?"

"No, mother, but I do not care for any supper this evening."

All heads were reverently bowed as the father returned thanks to the Giver of all good for the blessings of which they were about to partake; but George's heart was too full of bitterness to join in the sweet invocation. The more he thought over the afternoon's transactions with Dr. Blackfoot, the darker the future appeared to him.

"How are we ever to get out of debt," thought he, "with every one against us? How could he take all of my money, when he knows so well how much we need it?"

These were the thoughts that were passing through his mind when his mother came to the lounge on which he was reclining, after finishing her supper; and seeing the tears in his eyes, she said:

"What is it, George? Please tell me."

"His father, stepping to the stand at the head of the lounge for his paper, heard the mother's question, and waited for the answer. The tears came faster than ever for a moment, and then with an effort he forced them back, and told his parents all about his settlement with Dr. Blackfoot.

"The miserly scoundrel," ejaculated Mr. Hartley. "The idea of his charging you for what he has done for you, when the whole trouble was caused by your trying to save his daughter's life. I cannot nor will not stand it. He shall give every dollar of it back or I'll whip him within an inch of his life."

And taking his hat, he started with a full determination of carrying his threat into execution.

“Wait, Henry,” said his wife, “I wish to speak with you a moment before you go.”

She followed him to the yard gate, and as he halted there a moment for her, she kindly laid her hand on his shoulder, and said :

“Henry, we have both promised our Heavenly Father that we would never engage in anything, upon which we could not ask his blessing to rest.”

“I know that, Alice, but God’s punishment is too slow for such an incarnate fiend as Doc. Blackfoot ; and I shall surely be justified in inflicting it myself in such a case as this.”

“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord,” were the lowly spoken words of Mrs. Hartley, as she looked lovingly up into her husband’s eyes. The demon of anger was expelled, and he caught her in his arms, and said, as he fondly kissed her :

“Alice, you have always been my guardian angel, and I now see what a fool I should have made of myself ; for I had murder in my heart, and if one or the other of us had not been fatally hurt, I should at least have laid myself liable for provoking an assault on *his* premises, which would have cost me more than he has so unjustly taken from George. But, Alice, this is an outrage that is terribly hard for me to bear.”

“Yes, Henry, but God is our Father and he knows it all. He tells us to ‘fret not ourselves because of evil doers, neither be envious against the workers of iniquity ; for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither like the green herb.’ Oh, Henry, it seems to me

I have never before so felt the deep meaning of that word 'wither.' "

As they slowly walked back to the house, Mr. Hartley said :

" Alice, my dear wife, you have been the means in God's hands of leading me up to a higher, purer and nobler life. In all my disasters, you have lovingly and patiently stood by me ; and when I should have given up in utter despair, your cheering, loving words have given me new hope and courage to battle on and try to save our home and farm." And stooping down he imprinted a warm kiss on her cheek which gave her the sweet assurance of his true, manly affection, worth far more to her than a thousand homes could have been without it.

" Your mother is right, George," said Mr. Hartley, as they re-entered the room where the sad boy still remained reclining on the lounge. " It would have been very foolish in me to go and provoke an assault with the Doctor. But we shall get along some way without the money, better than he will with it. God is our Father and he careth for us."

These words were spoken with such confident assurance by Mr. Hartley, that the impression made on the mind of his son by this short sentence was deep and lasting. He had been disposed to doubt the fatherly care of God ; but he had never doubted his father's word in anything. And now that he knew that his father's faith in the Word of God was unshaken, it removed for the time the last vestige of doubt in his own mind.

When the hour for evening devotion arrived, Mr. Hartley opened the old family Bible at the 37th Psalm.

Never before had this Psalm seemed so full of meaning to him. At the close of each verse, he felt that God was speaking to him in almost every word of this Psalm. Some of the closing words struck him with peculiar force :

“ I have seen the wicked in great power and spreading himself like a green bay tree ;

“ Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not ; yea, I sought him but he could not be found.”

“ The transgressors shall be destroyed together ; the end of the wicked shall be cut off ;

“ But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. *He is their* strength in time of trouble.”

“ And the Lord shall help them and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them, because they trust in Him.”

While Henry Hartley's loved ones bowed with him at the family altar that night, they each felt that heaven was very near to them, and that the angel of God's presence was overshadowing them. As they arose from their knees, they heard footsteps approaching, and soon the door bell rang.

Mr. Hartley opened the door, and without waiting for an invitation, Joshua Slathers, followed by Esq. Barnes and three of Mr. Johnson's clerks, walked in, and began shaking hands all around in a very jolly manner.

“ It's a leettle late, Mr. Hartley, fer us fellers to come a spookin' around here, but we hain't quite got through with a little job we had on hand, an' we didn't think we could sleep well afore it was 'tended to. But here, George, I guess you are the one we want to talk to fust. Did Doc. Blackfoot give you a receipt in full fer his bill agin' you when you settled with him to-day ?”

“No, sir,” said George, “I was feeling so badly I did not think of that; but surely he will not try to collect it again, will he?”

“Not while Josh Slathers is in Caddo, George; so you kin rest easy about that. But we thought mebby you’d like to have a receipt in full, so we indoosed Doc. to give us one fer you.”

Then handing George the receipt, he turned to Mr. Hartley, and said:

“Uv all the cussid, miserly old scabs that ever struck this town, Doc. Blackfoot will come the nearest makin’ the devil ashamed of hisself. When I went up to the post office, arter I had got my chorin’ done to-night, an’ the postmaster ast me what I thought of a doctor as would charge George fifteen dollars fer savin’ his own daughter’s life, or words to that effect; ‘Why,’ sez I, ‘ef Doc. Blackfoot tuck one cent uv money from any one fer what little he did fer George, I’d be one uv three men that would put him on a rail an’ gin him a free ride up here in his shirt sleeves, an’ he should never git ofen that rail ’till he was willin’ to make George a present uv ten dollars in addition to the fifteen he tuck from him to-day.’ So I went down to Johnson’s store an’ talked it over with the boys, an’ we mighty soon agreed on a pic-nic up at Doc’s. I had jist brought up a green hickory rail to make some hoe handles outen, an’ s’posen Doc. mout not like walkin’ up here, I thought it would be an indoosement to him to do his part, ef we had a rail fer him to ride on. So I run over home an’ got the rail while the boys was a lockin’ up the store.”

But some explanation is here due the reader, in order that a clear understanding may be had of how Dr. Blackfoot was induced to contribute liberally to the

expenses of the "pic-nic" that night. When the postmaster first told Slathers of the transaction between George and the Doctor, he was so indignant that he resolved on a similar course to that which Mr. Hartley first intended; and it was with difficulty that the postmaster could restrain him from putting his threat into immediate execution. And not until he suggested to Slathers the propriety of taking up a small collection among the boys for George, and then calling on the Doctor to make up what they lacked of the fifteen dollars, did he yield the least in his purpose. But now a new thought struck him; and going down to Johnson's store, and telling the boys in his inimitable manner, all the circumstances in connection with the case, and dilating largely on the Doctor's penuriousness, he said:

"Boys, I tell you this thing shall not stand so. Why, I'd be ashamed uv myself an' every other cussid man in Caddo, ef we jist let that durned skunk uv a Doctor rob George uv his four months' wages, when he'd a been put to four times that much cost fer funeral expenses in his own family, besides fixin' up his cussid hoss an' buggy, ef that brave boy hadn't resked his life and stopped 'em. Why, rich as he is, he ort a made George a present uv double that amount, 'stid o' takin' any money from him,"

Esq. Barnes was in Johnson's store at the time, and he approved of the postmaster's plan of taking up a small collection, and donated one dollar himself. Four dollars more were soon made up by Slathers and the three clerks. Esq. Barnes then wrote out a receipt in full for George against the Doctor's account, and the party all walked up to Dr. Blackfoot's gate.

Slathers stepped briskly up on the veranda to the

front door, and rang the bell. The call was answered by the Doctor himself, who came to the door with his coat and shoes off, as he was about retiring for the night.

"Good evenin'," said Slathers, as he firmly gripped the Doctor's right hand and drew him out on the veranda, while he reached back with his left hand and closed the door behind him. "Say, Doc., we're takin' up a little collection to-night fer George Hartley, and hev come fer you to go along with us over there."

"Why do you wish me to go? Is the boy any worse?"

"Yes, Doc., he is fifteen dollars wuss off 'en he wus this mornin' an' you know cussid well why. Say, Doc., we've raised five dollars, an' seein' as you are under bigger obligations than eny uv us in this case, we've assessed you ten dollars on this little donation, which you kin jist fork over to us, ef you don't feel like goin' over there with us to-night to give it to that brave boy as saved you a durned sight more expense, besides, it may be, the life of your daughter."

"Well, gentlemen," said the Doctor, "if this is all the business you have with me to-night, you can consider yourselves dismissed; for I have no money to throw away on such people. If they are paupers, there is a township fund to be drawn on for their relief."

"Well, Doc., we thought mebby you mouten't feel like walkin' over thar to-night, so we jist brought this three cornered rail along fer your special 'commodation."

The gate was thrown wide open, and Josh lifted the Doctor astride the rail as easily as most men would have handled a ten year old boy. Two of Mr. Johnson's

clerks shouldered the rail, while the other held the Doctor's right leg and Slathers the left, and gave the command, "forward march," with Esq. Barnes laughing as he followed them with his lantern.

The Doctor cursed and raved lustily, saying he would "have every one of them arrested for this outrage."

"Halt," said Slathers, and the party stopped, but the Doctor was not permitted to change his position on the rail, which was fully five feet in the air, and he in close

proximity to its sharpest corner.



"Gentlemen," said Slathers, "Doctor wants to prefer charges agin' us, an' as Esq. Barnes is right here, perhaps he would like to have the papers made out now. Air ye settin' easy, Doc.?"

"No; and if you don't let me off, you'll

"Air ye settin' easy, Doc.?"

rue it the longest day of your life," answered the Doctor, fairly choking with passion.

"The Doctor's not a feelin' none too comfortable,

boys, so we'd better be movin' on. Forward march to Henry Hartley's."

They had not gone more than a square before Dr. Blackfoot saw how utterly helpless he was in the hands of such men, and not wishing to endure the torture of a half mile ride on such a vehicle, he changed his tone, and said:

"Hold on, men, I'll do what is right; let me down."

"Halt," said Slathers, and the party stopped again, but still no change in the Doctor's position was permitted.

"Now, Doc.," said Slathers, "ef you'll jist hand me the money you robbed that brave boy uv to-day, an' ten dollars on top uv it, to help out our little donation fer George, we'll excuse you under the circumstances from goin' up thar with us; but we want your receipt in full uv all claims agin' George er his father in the bargain."

"You only asked ten dollars a bit ago," said the Doctor, "and now you want twenty-five. I can't stand it."

"Forward march," was the quick response, and the party moved on with greater speed than ever, and a dozen or more men and boys had now gathered to see the fun. They had not gone a half a square further, however, before the Doctor said:

"Hold on, boys, I'll surrender."

"Halt; ease down, boys, and take a rest," said Slathers; "its up hill most uv the way from here."

The Doctor's feet were here allowed to touch the ground for the first time since leaving his front gate.

"You'll have to go back to my office with me to make the change," said the Doctor, "also to make out the receipt, as we have no paper here."

“No, Doc.,” said Slathers, “the ’Squire has the receipt already filled out, an’ you kin see well enough by his lantern to sign yer name to it. Ef yer hand should be a leetle shaky jist now, we kin all explain how it happened, ef yer writin’ should ever be called in question.”

Dr. Blackfoot was now completely subdued; so, handing Slathers the three five dollar bills that George had paid him, and a ten dollar bill beside, he called for the receipt; signed it doggedly, with a very shaky hand, and passed it back to Esq. Barnes with a muttered curse.

“Now, Doc.,” said the ’Squire, “you have had a rather severe lesson. Your penurious conduct in the treatment of the poor and unfortunate, has become notorious, and this last act claps the climax, and is intolerable. You spoke a bit ago of arrests, etc. While the proceedings of this evening have not been strictly within the bounds of the law, yet I doubt very much whether any jury you could get, would not acquit all indicted persons and throw you in the cost, if you should bring suit in such a case as this.”

The Doctor muttered something about the protection of the law in a man’s person and property, when S’athers said:

“We’ll take yer back home, Doc., ef you are afeard to go alone, an’ we’ll pertect yer tender feet from techin’ the ground all the way.”

The Doctor started back, limping over the gravelly street in his stocking feet, feeling relieved at every step that he placed between himself and his recent callers.

“Tell Josie,” said Slathers, “that we were sorry to keep you out so late, but this bein’ yer fust act uv

charity, it tuck you longer to make up yer mind 'bout how much to give than it will next time."

But to return to Henry Hartley's, where we left Slathers, Esq. Barnes, and Johnson's clerks.

"So, George, here's yer three five dollar bills the Doctor tuck from you, an' we make you a present uv fifteen more fer your bravery," said Slathers, as he handed the thirty dollars toward the pale boy.

"I cannot accept that much of it, Mr. Slathers," said George; "I am willing to pay the Doctor something for his services, but I did think, under the circumstances, that five dollars would have been enough; so, as you have brought the money back, I will accept ten dollars of it, if my parents do not object."

"I think, George," said his father, "you had better take fifteen dollars, under the circumstances, and if our kind friends know of any suffering they can relieve, with the other fifteen, let them use it in that way, as they neither wish to keep it themselves, nor return any part of it to the Doctor."

"But, Mr. Hartley," said Esq. Barnes, "such brave and noble acts should be rewarded, and we feel that your son is justly entitled to all we have brought him."

"Yes, an' a durn sight more," said Slathers, "ef we could a twisted it outen Doc. Blackfoot. 'Scuse me, Mrs. Hartley, I didn't mean to use no rough language afore wimin' an' childrin, but I was so cussid mad when I found how that durned skinflint had robbed George ——; there, dog it all, I cussed agin; but, Madam, I didn't mean to."

"I sincerely thank you, Mr. Slathers, for your kindness," said Mrs. Hartley, "and hope we may yet be able to show our appreciation of the same to all of you

gentlemen, in a more substantial manner than words can express to-night. But my husband is right. George ought not to take the other fifteen dollars, when there are many who need it so much worse."

"Well, ma'am," said Slathers, laying the money on the family Bible, "ef George won't take it, we'll jist make you a present uv it, fer we shan't take it back with us; an' ef you ever give a blessed cent uv it back to Doc. Blackfoot, it'll make me cuss more'n ever; an' I'm tryin' durn hard to quit usin' rough talk, an' think ef I didn't have so many aggravatin' things to worry me, I could git along fust rate."

CHAPTER XIII.

SHYLOCK THWARTED.

THE five-thousand dollar mortgage note that Henry Hartley had given to Mr. Benton, was made payable six years after date ; but the terms of the note were such, that if he failed to meet the semi-annual installments of interest promptly, the whole amount became due and collectable on demand. Lawyer Benton had, only a few days before, disposed of the note and transferred the mortgage to Dr. Blackfoot, fearing that Hartley would never be able to redeem his farm, and not wishing to foreclose the mortgage himself, thought to rid himself of all responsibility in this way.

Mr. Hartley had not learned of this transfer of his paper ; and on account of the low price of farm products, it had been impossible for him to raise the entire amount necessary to meet the first installment of interest, which fell due the following Friday. He had therefore determined to call on Mr. Benton and pay all that he could, and ask for a few days' extension of the time for the remainder, which was only fifteen dollars. But now that just this amount had been so unexpectedly left in his hands, both his wife and George insisted on his taking it to meet the payment then falling due. So he went early next morning to Benton's office with the money. On entering the front room of the office, he found that Mr. Benton was busily engaged with some

one in his consultation room, which was separated from the main office by a thin wood partition. Seating himself by the table, he took up the morning paper and began looking over the news, while waiting for Mr. Benton to be at leisure. He had been thus engaged but a few moments, however, when he heard the angry voice of Dr. Blackfoot, for he it was who had called so early for consultation with his attorney, as to what redress, if any, there was to be had for the unceremonious treatment he had received the evening before.

“Then you think, Benton, there would be no use in beginning a suit?”

“I would not advise it, Doctor, for they would doubtless demand a jury trial; and while Henry Hartley has been very unfortunate by endorsing so largely for his speculative friends, still he has the confidence and warmest sympathy of all the best citizens of Caddo. And as the circumstances of the boy's being hurt would be brought out, you could hardly get a jury that would convict one of them, and you would be thrown in the cost.”

“Well, sir, you can bet your bottom dollar on one thing, Mr. Benton, if Henry Hartley allows his boy to keep a dollar of that money, I'll foreclose that mortgage the first time he lets the interest go one hour past due.”

“Well, Doc., you will have to do as you like about that. But I'll tell you, the sympathies of all the best citizens are with Mr. Hartley, and I would much rather see you foreclose that mortgage, if it should become necessary, than to have that unpleasant job on my hands; and as it will be barely possible for him to meet even his first payment promptly, I was the more willing to submit to the heavy discount at which you bought the

note. In fact, he told me just before I sold you the paper, that unless he could collect some outstanding accounts, it would be impossible for him to meet the full amount of the interest promptly; and that, I believe, falls due to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir, and by the Eternal, Benton, that howling Methodist, temperance fanatic, shall receive no favors from me. If the full payment is not promptly met to-morrow, I shall expect you to take the necessary steps at once for foreclosing the mortgage. That is not a bad piece of property, and I have a man that I wish to put there soon."

"I would rather you would let Lawyer Quigley have that job, Doc.; he will take any kind of a case, and I prefer, for special reasons, to have nothing to do with any case that will distress Henry Hartley."

"The devil you do! Haven't I retained you as my attorney?"

"Not in this case, Doc., and I tell you frankly, I want nothing to do with it."

"Look here, Benton, have you been setting up a job on me? Is there some flaw in the title to that property? Or have you and Hartley been working some hocus-pocus game for defeating the foreclosure of the mortgage, in case he fails to meet his payments promptly?"

"No, sir, the title to that property is perfect, Doc., and no court in the State can prevent a foreclosure if it is demanded, when the terms of such a note fail to be complied with. But, as I said before, for special reasons I prefer not to take this case against Mr. Hartley."

"All right, Benton, but if I take this case to Quigley, and he handles it to my satisfaction, I shall probably give him the bulk of my business in the future; for I

need an attorney who is not too conscientious to do his duty. I suppose you little thought when I bought the mortgage note, that I should so soon come into possession of the Hartley property; but I tell you frankly that was my object in buying the paper, for I knew d—d well that Hartley could never keep the interest up on such a debt as that, and I would rather have that farm than fifty per cent. advance on the face of the note.”

“I feared at the time I sold you the note, Doc., that he could not redeem his farm; but I knew you did not need the money, and I hoped that you would give such a man as Hartley a fighting chance at least to save his home.”

“Oh, yes, Benton, you are a very unselfish man, a model dispenser of other people’s charities; but when you unload such paper as that on me, and then ask me to carry it to eternity to accommodate such a temperance fanatic as Hartley, who has done so much to injure my business here, you may as well understand, first as last, that you are barking up the wrong tree; for I’d see him in h—l before I would lift a finger to help him save his home and farm.”

“Now, Doc., I must contend that Henry Hartley has done or said no more against your business than every man who has a family of boys growing up here in Caddö should. You know very well that his brother-in-law, Will Noble, had as fine a set of boys as could be found anywhere, when you started your drug store here; but the attractions that were kept in that back room were too much for them, and they are now hard drinkers, and all going to the devil as fast as possible. How can you blame him, as superintendent of the Methodist Sunday School, for warning all boys and

young men of the danger in frequenting such places as you very well know you and your son have kept?"

"Phew!" whistled Dr. Blackfoot; "when did you join the temperance cranks? I suppose they will have you in the church next. Candidate for Sunday School superintendent, arn't you? Now, look here, Benton; if Bill Noble's boys have no more sense than to make d—d hogs of themselves, it's none of my business, nor yours either, who gets the money for the whisky they drink; and if we can scrape in their loose change, we have as good a right as any one. We have paid our money for our license, and the law protects us in our business."

"Dr. Blackfoot," said Benton, with some warmth, "the fact of an evil being legalized does not make it right. For instance, in many cities, houses of public prostitution have been legalized. But suppose that one of your own beautiful daughters should, by any combination of circumstances be lured into that kind of a life, would you not feel justified in resorting to any legitimate means to reclaim her? Nay, would you not feel it your duty to avenge, with your own life's blood, if need be, the betrayer of your daughter's virtue, even though the party who has ruined her may run his house and business under a license? I tell you, Doc., the time is near at hand when this thing of licensing the most damnable evils that ever cursed the earth *will not be tolerated in our country*. The sentiment in favor of protecting our boys and girls from these two great evils that have ruined a thousand fold more homes than all other causes combined, is rapidly gaining in our country; and you may as well make up your mind to get out of the way, or be run over by the engine."

“ Oh, fiddlesticks! Benton ; my guess is, the engine will be thrown from the track, and the engineer and passengers on your temperance train will get their d—d necks broken, if they undertake any such job as you indicate. I tell you, sir, the people of this country will never give up their liberty to eat and drink what they d—d please ; and you can’t ever control or prevent it by law.”

“ Doesn’t the law control the sale of poisons, and require you to label them as such when you sell them, Doc.?”

“ Certainly, sir, but that is to prevent accidents or injuries from occurring to our customers, who might innocently mistake them for harmless medicines.”

“ Well, now, Doc., tell me what greater injury could happen to your boy or mine than to have him *besotted!* *literally ruined*, yes, poisoned to death by these drinks, which you very well know are most *damnable adulterated* with the most deadly poisons? And don’t you suppose Will Noble’s boys are as dear to him as ours are to us? No wonder Henry Hartley warns all boys and young men to keep away from your place of business, when he sees the ruin that has been brought on his sister’s children by the very enticements you have held out for them.”

“ Oh, Benton, you are crazy. If Bill Noble’s boys, or anybody else, have a mind to make d—d hogs of themselves, and drink themselves to death, the sooner they do so the better ; I am sure at least it would be no concern of mine.”

“ Well, Doc., you are a harder brick than I took you to be ; but as I have not yet looked over my morning mail, and have some writing to do before court

convenes this morning, I shall have to be excused, unless there is something further of importance you wish to consult with me about."

Henry Hartley had been an unwilling listener to all this conversation, and his feelings can be better imagined than described, when the two men entered the office from the consultation room. Mr. Benton greeted him with a warm shake of the hand, but Dr. Blackfoot merely inclined his head with a cold "Good morning, sir." The former, feeling sure from the expression on Hartley's face that he had learned the fact of his having transferred the note and mortgage to Dr. Blackfoot, said:

"Mr. Hartley, I was in need of some money, so I sold your note to the Doctor, and if you should need a little assistance to carry it, I may be able to help you temporarily."

"Thank you, Mr. Benton," said Hartley, while the Doctor's brow darkened at the prospect of any aid being offered that might prevent an immediate foreclosure of the mortgage. "I have sufficient means to meet this payment, but God only knows how I shall be able to meet those in the future. It might be better for me to give up the struggle now; but for the sake of my wife and children, I shall fight on awhile longer in my efforts to save our farm and home. So, Doctor, if you will receipt me for this payment, I can go back to my family with the assurance that we have a home for six months longer, at least."

"Certainly," said the Doctor, as he doggedly counted the money and found the amount to be correct, but inwardly cursing the luck that had enabled Hartley to

meet his semi-annual payment of interest one day before it was due.

Clearer than ever did Henry Hartley see the wisdom of his wife in preventing him on the previous evening from taking vengeance on Dr. Blackfoot, personally; as this could have brought him no money, but would have left him utterly helpless in the hands of a heartless, grasping tyrant, even if no other serious results had followed.

CHAPTER XIV.

A DUTCHMAN'S COURTSHIP, AND HIS SECOND-HAND WIFE.

"Some men seem born to luck,
Others to adversity."

WE have already alluded to Henry Hartley's brother-in-law, whose four sons, Charles, Edgar, John and Walter, had become regular patrons of the Blackfoot "drug" store and billiard rooms. There are other characters in Caddo, with whom the reader must now become acquainted.

Jacob Staats, a short but very fleshy German, and Patrick Murphy, a lank, red faced Irishman—the latter being one of Blackfoot's most faithful customers. Murphy had no family except his wife, Cathleen; while Staats had beside his wife, a family of seventeen children, of all ages from one year old up to eighteen. Five years before the incidents related in this chapter, his wife died, leaving him with six children to care for, the youngest of which was a babe two weeks old. About this time Mrs. Lena Straub was left a widow with four children, the oldest of which was four, and the next two years old, while the two youngest were twins, six months old. Time weighed heavily on Mr. Staats' hands, as both widower and nurse, since he had given but little care to either his children or household matters during his first wife's time; so he determined to break the monotony of his extra family cares by calling

on Mrs. Straub, ostensibly for the purpose of getting some advice about the management of his children's clothing, but really for another purpose. He accordingly told his children that he was going over to see if Mrs. Straub could fix up their pants and dresses; telling his oldest daughter, who was then thirteen, to keep the children in the house until he returned. Although Mrs. Straub's parents were German, they had never used their native language much in their family, and none of their children had ever learned to use it; consequently, Mr. Staats, who could talk German much more readily than English, was at quite a disadvantage in making himself clearly understood in the latter language.

"I kooms ofer to shwap some of mine droubles mit you dees evening, Meesis Shtraub," said Mr. Staats, as he entered his widowed neighbor's dwelling. "I don't can undershtand how you veemens vas geepts dhose childer's glose so goodt und glean already, ven mine pees all so dirdty as von bigs, und more raggedt as der tuyfel. Ofer id vas shopping some voodt oder vorking der garten in, dodt voodt make der glose glean, und mendt up der holes in 'em, I could do dodt already. Und ven mine leedle paby efry nighdt gries mit der golic, oder some dings like dodt, I not can dell vos in der tuyfel to do mit him vonce."

"Perhaps you let his milk sour," said Mrs. Straub.

"Yah, ve all sour milk trinks, und somedimes glabber; budt dodt ish healdy, I taughdt. Und der vedder ish so varm, der milk sours righdt away off quick already."

"Oh, Mr. Staats, you must not let that little babe have

sour milk, unless you intend to kill it," said Mrs. Straub.

"Gill my leedle paby? Nine; I'd sooner lose mine pest zow und bigs, as dod't leedle paby. Zo if milk gills him, I guess bedder I feed idt mit breadt und betatoes; dondt idt, Mrs. Shtraub?"

"Oh, Mr. Staats, you need a woman to take care of that babe. I fear you will lose it, the way you are managing things."

"Dodt ish dhru, Mrs. Shtraub, und I taughdt may-pee I gill dwo shtones mit von pird, ofer I ask you to pe dodt vomans."

"I? How can I leave my own children to go and take care of yours, Mr. Staats? You surely cannot expect that."

At the close of this sentence, all six of Mr. Staats' children were heard at the door; the babe and the next two older crying lustily.

"Vahroon grien tsee so loudt ouse?" said Mr. Staats, as he stepped to the door and looked out at his ragged flock. "Go rightd away home mit you already, und shtay mit der house in."

"The children want to see the new clothes that Mrs. Straub is makin' for 'em, an' I couldn't keep 'em home," said Louisa, who was holding the crying babe in her arms.

While Mrs. Straub would have had no objections to becoming Mrs. Staats the second, under ordinary circumstances, as he was fairly well off, while she had been left poor and was harassed with debts, yet the sight that met her at the door was not well calculated to advance his suit. Reaching down, she took the babe in her arms, and said:

“Mr. Staats, I will keep the babe for you until you can get a nurse that will understand how to care for it properly.”

“Yah, yah, Meesis Shtraub, dodt vill pe righdt goodt vor der paby, budt I nodt can shtay away vrom him already, so I bees vore dimes more in your house ash in mine, ofer you kooms nicht mit me to leaf.”

“Oh, well, Mr. Staats, you can come over as often as you wish, if I keep the babe; but as it requires care that Louisa cannot give it, I shall keep it until you can get a nurse for it.”

The result was, that in a few weeks time the babe had found a place in the warm mother heart of Mrs. Straub, and she did not care to give it up; so three months from the evening Mr. Staats first called upon her, she took up her permanent abode with him as Mrs. Staats. She married her first husband at the early age of seventeen, and was, at the time of her marriage to Mr. Staats, only twenty-two, and the mother of four children; the last two, as previously stated, being twins. Since there are but few instances on record of such rapid multiplying in any one family, this book would be incomplete, should we fail to inform the reader that before Mrs. Staats was twenty-seven years old she was the mother of thirteen children—eleven of which were living—besides being the step-mother of the six children of Mr. Staats by his first wife. This can be better understood, though, by giving a part of the conversation between Mr. Staats and the census taker, which occurred in Mr. Johhson's store:

“What is your name, Mr. Staats?” said the census taker.

“Vat ish mine name? Didn’t you shpoke idt already?”

“Yes, sir, but I must have your first name. Is it John, Jacob, or Frederick Staats? or what?”

“Yah, you guessed idt; dodt ish him already.”

“Well, which of the names mentioned is yours—John, Jacob or Frederick? I mentioned three.”

“Oh, yah, I vorshtay now already; my name ish Shacob, budt you can put him down Shake, vor dodt ish vot all der beoples galls me.”

“Well, now, Mr. Staats, please give me your age, and the name of the country and place where you were born.”

“I peen four und thritcic, last Gristmas.”

“Thirty-four last Christmas, I suppose you mean?”

“Yah, dodt ish vat I saidt.”

“Now, where were you born?”

“I vos porn mit mine vater und moter, py dhere home, I dink already.”

“Yes, but where did your father and mother live? Was it in Germany, Italy, France, or this country?”

“Yah, I dink idt vas.”

“Was which? in Germany?”

“Yah, und glose py Vertempurg.”

“All right; now give me your wife’s name.”

“Vich von you meandt, Meester Luring?”

“You surely have but one, Mr. Staats.”

“Yah, Ish haben dwo, budt der forest von ish tead more ash vife year ago already, und der von I got now ish mine second-handedt frow.”

“Well, your present wife’s name is the one I want.”

“Her name ish Lena Staats, now already.”

“And how old is she?”

“Seeven und swancy, latst March.”

“Twenty-seven; and where was she born?”

“Py her fater und moter in Bittsburg.”

“Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania?”

“Yah, dodt ish him.”

“Now, Mr. Staats, I want the number, names and ages of your children.”

“Maype you likes to know how many hairs I got mine headt on already. Vat vor you peen so inguisitive? I’ve godt blendy vor all mine shildrens, if dhere vas not half so many, dondt it, Meester Shonson?”

“Oh, yes, Mr. Staats, you are pretty well fixed for taking care of your family, and your wife is one of the best of managers,” said Mr. Johnson. “But Mr. Luring is the census taker, and he is only asking you such questions as the law requires should be answered.”

“Ish dodt so, Mr. Luring?”

“Yes, sir, and I have just come from your house, at the request of a young lady who met me at the door and told me I should find you here; so, if you will answer my questions I shall soon be through with you. First, the number of your children, please?”

“Sevendeen,” promptly answered Mr. Staats.

“Seventeen?” said Luring, “how can that be when your wife is only twenty-seven years old?”

“Oh, I toldt you predy quick how dodt vas. Lena ish my second-handedt vife, und she hat vour shildrens mit her vorust hushpandt, und I hat six mit mine vorust vife.”

“Very well, but that only makes ten; and as your first wife has only been dead five years, how can you account for seven more children by your last wife?”

“Vell I toldt you how dodt vas vonce; mine second

handedt vife she ish von shmardt vomans already. You see ve hat den childrens petween us pefore I marriedt Lena Shtraub, und den der vorust ve got pehindt de dime vot I marriedt Lena, vas a dwinn; de second vas a driplet, und the third vas a—a—vat you gall him? —a—a—quadrupedt.”

“You mean quadruplets, Mr. Staats,” said Mr. Luring.

“Yah, I guess dodt ish vat he vas.”

“But that would make nineteen children, instead of seventeen, Mr. Staats.”

“Dodt ish dhrue, if dey all hadt leafed; budt ve lost dwo vat died vrom dodt latst litter; so you see dodt leafes us only sevendeen pedween us.”

“Well, judging the future by the past, Mr. Staats, you bid fair to——”

The sentence was broken off here by the cry of “Fire,” from several voices on the street, and every one ran to see where it was; some to aid in extinguishing the fire, but the greater number to gratify their curiosity, and as some expressed themselves, “To see the fun.”

It was found to be Dr. Blackfoot’s barn; and before any sensible efforts were made to put out the fire, the whole building, except one end, in which there were no doors or openings, was one sheet of flame; and as it was impossible to get the Doctor’s fine span of bays out, they were burned to a crisp, together with the whole building and its contents, including his fine carriage and trotting buggy he had run in not an hour before, and his corn, hay, etc. All that could now be done was to prevent the spread of the fire to other adjacent buildings; and as the chief of the fire company had been disabled by a fall the day before, this would not have

been done, had not Henry Hartley arrived just at this time and taken command of the citizen's fire company. He was a cool, clear-headed man, in whom all had implicit confidence, and under his leadership every man worked with a will. The Doctor's large residence stood a short distance to the north-west of the burning barn, and as the wind was blowing from that quarter, it rendered the danger to buildings in that direction less imminent. But as the wind was carrying showers of sparks to the south-east, Hartley stationed men on and around all the buildings for a square or two away in that direction, with vessels of water ready to extinguish any incipient flame, while the fire engine was flooding the roofs and sides of the buildings nearest the fire.

The men had scarcely succeeded in getting the fire under control when the eccentric rod of the fire engine broke, which of course disabled it from further use, and nothing but the determined efforts by the men with buckets, prevented the most destructive fire that Caddo had ever known. In their excitement, every ladder belonging to the fire company had been left so near the burning building, that when the wind blew the south wall out, it fell on and burned them; so there was not one left with which to reach the eaves of Dr. Blackfoot's residence, on the roof of which a small blaze was now seen starting. The firemen, and even Mr. Hartley, for a time seemed confused. With no way of either throwing water so high, or climbing to the roof of the building, how could the house be saved?

The Doctor was wild with excitement and screamed out: "Five hundred dollars to the man who will climb to that fire and put it out."

"Guess you're 'bout as good at climbin' bare walls as

anybody, Doc., so s'posen you try it yourself and save your money," said Josh Slathers, who, with George Hartley, had been a mile from town at work when they saw the smoke, and in coming up were the first to discover the fire on the roof. Just then a cry for help was heard from Nora, the Doctor's daughter, in the north yard, and a dozen or more men ran around there to see what was the matter. George Hartley, immediately on reaching the fire, dodged around into the back yard, and cutting a clothes line that was stretched there, tied one end to his left wrist, and, after throwing off his shoes, began, cat-like, to climb the lightning rod which came down on the north side of the building. While this was very hard work, he had but little difficulty until he reached the edge of the roof, where the rod bent over the eaves, and around under the cornice. One of the staples or eyes through which the rod passed was about four feet from the cornice in the side wall, and another about a foot from the eaves on the roof. He could rest his right foot on the hook, or staple in the wall below, while he reached up over the roof to the staple there; but he could not draw his body up over the edge of the roof without some support from below. So he pulled the rope from his left wrist around the staple under the rod on the roof, until he had enough of it pulled through to make a loop or noose, which he let down from the staple over the edge of the roof, far enough for him to get his left foot into it, and then tied a slip knot around the staple. With this support he swung himself over the eaves upon the roof. But here he met a worse difficulty than any before, for his left hand was tied by this noose so closely to the staple, that he could only move it a few inches in any

direction. The roof was so steep that he could not move his right hand far enough down the rod to disengage the rope from the staple, and still retain his position on the roof for a moment. He made two or three desperate efforts to break the rope, but this he could not do.

The sight of young Hartley in this fearful position on the roof was what had caused this cry of alarm from Nora, and the rushing of the men to the north yard in time to witness his most desperate struggles. Not a man on the ground could climb to him, and a feeling of terror shot through his veins, as he heard the crackling of the shingles near him on the opposite side of the roof, of the burning building. To remain there and be burned alive was a thought too horrible to contemplate. The men below were frantically calling for him to come down, not knowing that his efforts to break the rope had drawn the knot so tight that, with his slender hold on the steep roof, it was impossible for him to move a foot in either direction. In another desperate effort to break the rope, he saw that he had loosened the staple in the roof, and it occurred to him that he possibly could pull it out of the roof and slip it up the rod to the next staple, and there hold himself in position with his left hand while he untied the knot with his right. So pressing his knee under the rod below the staple, and at the same time lifting on the rod above it with his hand he pulled it out of the roof, after which he had little trouble in extricating himself.

All this was done in less time than it takes to tell it, and young Hartley was quickly running along the comb of the roof with the rope in his hand, one end of which he let lown at the west end of the building and called to

Slathers to tie the end of it to the pail of water that Jake Staats had been carrying around for at least a quarter of an hour. This he quickly drew up, and running back along the comb of the building, threw it on the fire, which by this time had spread over six or eight feet of surface. A dozen other pails of water were by this time taken to the end of the building at which Hartley had let down the rope for the first. Quick as a cat he ran back and let down the bucket to be filled again. As is often the case at a fire, nearly every man seemed to have lost his wits; so when the bucket was low enough for another to be emptied into it, Jake Staats began to untie the rope, thinking that as the descending vessel was empty, it must be untied and a full vessel tied on in its place. Slathers was just in the act of emptying his pail into the one Hartley had let down, as Staats drew it aside to untie it. Quick as a thought he threw the whole pail of water into Staats' face, and as the surprised German turned from him with a regular war-whoop, he threw another pailful over his back, saying as he threw the last over him :

“Git out o’ the way you cussid ole beer keg; what are you pullin’ George’s pail away for?”

“Oo—oo—oop! Mine Godt in himmel, vat vor you so mooch coldt vater trow me on already?” said Staats as he waddled off with water dripping from every thread on him. This was all done so quickly that scarcely a moment’s time was lost in filling the bucket again, and the second pail of water was thrown on the fire with more effect than the first; but the fire had burned so far under the roof that it took more than a dozen pails of water to extinguish it.

While no one expected, or would have received any

compensation from the Doctor for services rendered in extinguishing the fire, yet Slathers, the Doctor's great tormentor, could not resist the temptation to call his attention to the fact that George Hartley had climbed to the roof of the building and saved his house, and that the crowd would like to see the cash paid over that he had offered to any one who would perform such a feat. Before he could reply, however, George indignantly protested against receiving anything, saying:

"Dr. Blackfoot is surely welcome to all that I, or any of us have done, and we should brand ourselves as unworthy of the name of neighbors, if, at such a time as this we failed to do all in our power to protect his property."

"Yes, that's so," said Slathers, "but, Doc., you mustn't bring a bill agin' him fer cuttin' yer clothes line, nor snatchin' a steeple offen' yer lightnin'-rod."

"When I need your advice about how to run my business, I'll call on you, Josh," was the Doctor's quick retort.

Dr. Blackfoot was an inveterate smoker, and while in the stable a short time before the fire was discovered, he had dropped the stump of his cigar in the litter behind the horses, from which he knew the fire must have started; so he had no one to blame but himself for his loss.

The fire being now extinguished, the company dispersed without any expression of gratitude from the Doctor for their neighborly services rendered. But a pleasant smile and a kind "Thank you," from Nora, as George passed the veranda where she was standing as he left the yard, was worth far more to him than the Doctor's money could have been.

CHAPTER XV.

THE IRISHMAN AND HIS DOGS.

IN following Jacob Staats so far, we have drifted entirely away from Pat Murphy, whom we introduced to the reader at the beginning of the previous chapter. We have said that Pat's family consisted of himself and wife; but his lack of children was, in part at least, compensated for by a large family of dogs of various ages and breeds, numbering in all seven, at the time of this writing. At times, however, he was the owner of more than double this number.

His time was about equally divided between his dogs and the Blackfoot saloon. In fact, his dogs furnished him a never failing subject of conversation, and had it not been that Mrs. Murphy was an excellent hand at the wash tub and ironing table, not only herself, but Pat and his large family of dogs, would often have gone to bed hungry. He was peculiarly fond of his hounds and bull dogs, though three of the latter and one of the former were so vicious that he was obliged to keep them chained whenever he was unable to watch them; and the unearthly howls they kept up day and night on this account, became anything but sweet music to his neighbors, and especially to Jacob Staats, whose lot joined that of the dog fancier.

Mr. Staats was a butcher and bologna sausage vender, and had of late been suffering severely with rheumatism, which was much aggravated by the sudden

drenching bath he had received at the fire; so that, between his rheumatic pains and the howling of Murphy's dogs, he had been kept awake nearly the whole night through. Seeing Pat the next morning, unchaining and feeding his dogs, Staats called to him to come to the fence that separated their lots, as he was in mortal fear of his neighbor's dogs and dared not venture near the savage brutes.

"Vas for you so tam many togs geep already, Pat?" said he. "They nodd can some vork do your garten in, und they so much feetles eadt already as my poys und cals pudt all together by himself."

"Be dad, Jake," said Pat, "an' it ain't for wor-ruckin' in me garden that Oi kapes me beautiful dogs, at all at all. Cathleen can do all that asy enough. It's for the protiction av me property an' their blissid company, that Oi am kapin' what few Oi've got left. You know Oi sold thra last Friday."

"Vell, Pat, vot you got left make so tam much noise mit dher howlins dot ter tuyfel not could sleep mit in a mile of 'em."

"The divil go slapy, thin," said Pat. "Fhwot ud he be after tryin' to slape around here for, anyhow?"

Staats was a peaceable man, and preferred buying and killing the seven remaining dogs, to having any trouble with his neighbor; so he said:

"Pat, I wants to some togs puy, already. Vot are all your togs vordt?"

This struck Pat in a tender spot, as he was owing ten dollars at the Blackfoot saloon on old scores for drinks, and had been refused any further credit if he failed to settle his account that week; so he replied:

"Twenty dollars for the lot, av ye dare."

“Nine, Pat, I noddt can so mooch moneysh bay; ta not bees more tan seven tollar vort, if ta all vas fat enough for bologna sausages, alreadyty.”

“The devil go azy wid your siven dollars! An it’s not Pat Murphy that ud be afther silling all av his foin dogs so chape; but av ye’ll give me tin dollars for the lot ye may *take* ’em, an bad luck to yeze.”

“I not vill *dake* der togs at any brice, but ofer you vill pring him into mine yardt over, und tie him midt some shtakes to der groundt, I keefs you der ten dollar alreadyty.”

This Pat agreed to, as he thought his pets would be so near him that he could see and hear them almost as well as if they were in his own yard; and the ten dollars would re-establish his credit with the Blackfoot saloon. So, after some parleying as to whether the dogs’ chains should be transferred with the dogs, and it finally being agreed that Pat should have the chains back that evening, he took them all over into Staat’s back yard and staked them out in a semicircle, just out of reach of each other, and then went back, shaking his ten silver dollars at his wife, who had been patiently waiting the past half hour for the transaction to be over, so that he could eat his breakfast with her. Cathleen was highly delighted with the whole transaction, as she well knew the dogs were not only worthless property, but a nuisance to the neighborhood, and twice had the town council been petitioned to abate it by a summary dispatch of Murphy’s worthless swarm of noisy canines. And she was congratulating herself on the prospect of some much needed clothing that both she and Pat could now secure for themselves by the cash just received, when her honored lord and master arose from the table, say-

ing that he was going up to Blackfoot's store to settle his account there. He had not told her before that he owed any bill there, and her heart sank within her at his reply to her question, as to how much it was, when she learned that the whole amount he had just received would be required to meet it.

As Pat went past Mr. Staat's lot on his way to the Blackfoot saloon, he saw his neighbor with his boys busily engaged in excavating a large hole on the back part of the lot, but he was in too much haste to make his arrangements secure for future drinks, to give his neighbor's work more than a passing thought; and not until his return late in the afternoon, (much the worse from liquor), did he learn that all of the seven dogs had found their last resting place in the wide and deep grave that Staats and his boys had dug for them. But his first impression was, on calling for his chains in the evening and finding some blood on them, that his neighbor had butchered the dogs for bologna.

"Der togs vill shtay glose py me now mitout some shanes und shtakes, Pat," said Staats, as he handed the bloody chains to the latter, who had come over to see how his pets were getting along.

"Sure, Jake, an have ye killed ivery blissed one av 'em?" said Pat in a much offended tone.

"Yah, I not can so many togs und shilders togeder geep already."

"Ow, you hathen, butcherin' Dutchman," said Pat, "to make all those foin dogs up into bologna at once. Why don't you fade yer family on something dacent, loik Oi do mine?"

"I dinks your *frow* der vamily veeds already, Pat. *You not ever* some dings to eadt home prings vonce, so

pedder you look a leedle oudt how you say ve eadt togs."

"The divil take the loiks av yer fer killin such beautiful bastes ; an av ye'll coom over in my yard Oi'll tache yez how to kill a dacent lot av dogs an' ate 'em all up in wan day, av ye have a large family. Bad luck to yez."

This was too much for Staats, and he indignantly replied :

"I toldt you already dot ve not der togs eadt. Ve purriedt him all togeder in von pig hole py himself ; und I vill not some more such talkings shtandt vrom you. So pedder you go into my yardt ouse bretty quick rhidt away off, oder I vill some thrashings give you mit ter groundt."

Pat was not so drunk but that he could see the danger of being much worsted in a conflict with Staats and his boys, so he permitted himself to be led home by his faithful wife, who insisted on his going immediately with her, but he muttered dire vengeance against his neighbor as he went ; and after reaching his own yard he stormed out :

"Bad luck to the loikes av ye murtherin' villains. Maybe ye thinks yez got some chape bologna. Be dad, I belave you wod butcher the divil himself, av yez were out of mate. Bad cess to yez."

This he said, having a vague idea that his dogs had been converted into bologna sausage for the benefit of Staats' large family. So the remainder of the evening was spent in venting his rage on his patient wife, who, like myriads of other women, clung faithfully to her reckless, worthless husband ; bearing all of this unmerited abuse, without a mumur or complaint toward him who had pledged his protecting love to her at the sacred altar.

For several days after the death of the dogs, Pat was gloomy and dejected, and seemingly in a deep study. Finally he was missed from Caddo, but no one knew where he had gone nor why he had left the place. Two weeks after, however, he was seen late in the afternoon,



coming back, leading, or almost dragging, two large and horridly ugly dogs behind him, both of the female persuasion. Where he had found such abominable canine specimens, no one could guess; but that his yard was soon well stocked again with a noisy breed of dogs, his neighbors

were painfully conscious, as their unearthly howling kept Staats awake for two nights after their arrival.

"Py tam," said he, "I findt me oudt I peen von big fool already, mit puying so many togs to shtop dhere noishe, ver dhose vot Pat prings day pehindt yesterday can vake ter very tuyfel mit dhere howlings."

CHAPTER XVI.

MARRIED TO A FAST MAN.

“ ’Tis not in titles, nor in rank ;
’Tis not in wealth, like London Bank,
To make us truly blessed.”

TWO years have made many changes in Caddo. Among these changes, that of Belle Blackfoot's appearing in society as one of the reigning belles of fashion as well as in name, creating the greatest sensation, especially with the young men of Caddo. She was really handsome, though her dark eyes, with jet black hair and rosy cheeks, made her beauty of a far coarser type than that of her younger sister, Nora ; who, with her bright, golden hair, and sky-blue eyes, and a complexion that almost rivaled the lily for whiteness, presented a picture of rare beauty, loveliness and modesty, which caused many a heart to beat more quickly, and many a head to turn and look admiringly after her as she passed.

While Belle was offensively proud of her handsome and stylish appearance, Nora seemed to be totally unconscious of the fact that her beauty, grace and loveliness had no rival in Caddo.

Dr. Blackfoot was justly proud of his handsome daughters, and while he furnished them with plenty of money to gratify every reasonable desire, yet he ruled with an iron hand as to what company they should entertain. It mattered not how intelligent, refined,

or truly noble in character the young man might be who dared to call at the Blackfoot mansion, for even a social chat with his daughters, if the gentleman was not considered decidedly wealthy, he was soon made to feel that he was a most unwelcome guest, by both the Doctor and his wife, and not infrequently by Belle herself.

In direct contrast with Dr. and Mrs. Blackfoot, in this respect, were their neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Asa Warren, whose two daughters, Maggie and Nina, were the same age of Belle and Nora. Frequently had they warned their daughters of the danger in encouraging the attentions of any young gentlemen who were of intemperate and impure habits, regardless of what their wealth, or social relations might be.

Nina, the younger of the Warren girls, was wayward and fond of stylish dress and display, and found the society of Belle Blackfoot more to her taste than that of any other girl in Caddo; while Maggie Warren and Nora Blackfoot were the warmest friends, enjoying each other's society more than either did that of her sister. The Warren girls were not so dazzlingly beautiful as were the Doctor's daughters, yet they were handsome and attractive; and as Mr. Warren was the wealthy president of the Caddo bank, his daughters were always made quite welcome at Dr. Blackfoot's residence.

Nina Warren had taken quite a fancy to Edgar Noble, which he heartily reciprocated; and had it not been that his father, William Noble, had recently become bankrupt through his reckless, wayward sons, she would not for a moment have hesitated in yielding to his suit for her hand, although she well knew that he was dissipating fearfully, and scarcely a week passed that he did not

leave the Blackfoot saloon much the worse from liquor. In vain did her anxious parents plead with her to have nothing to do with him, not on account of his poverty, but through fear of the consequences of his dissipation. In vain did they picture to her the horrors of a drunkard's wife.

Nina was a self-willed girl, and the more she was opposed in her love affair the more determined was she in disregarding all warning and counsel from those whom she knew were her best and truest friends; and she allowed the advice of Belle Blackfoot to outweigh them all. Belle was her confidential friend in everything.

One evening as she and Belle were sitting alone in the Doctor's library, she said, "Belle, I'm just worried to death lately. Pa and Ma and everybody else are just going for me about Edgar. They seem to think because he gets a little funny at times, that he is bound to make a drunkard of himself. Even Maggie is fretting about it, and says she hopes I will never think of marrying so fast a young man as he is getting to be."

"Oh, fiddlesticks, Nora!" said Belle, "I should not let such advice as that have any weight with me, I assure you. I know Ed. is just a little bit fast, but then all young men with any style and spirit about them are that way now-a-days. The only thing I should object to, is his poverty, for he is a handsome, stylish looking fellow, and the jolliest company in town. Then you know his father used to be well off, so Ed. knows just how to carry himself with us wealthy girls or any other stylish society. Why, I tell you Nina, I'd much rather dance with him than with my own beau, Fin Mincer, for Ed. is so strong and manly that he almost carries me on his arm through the dance, while Mr. Mincer is such a little

spindle-shanked fellow I'm always afraid to lean on *him* for support, and I sometimes have to hold him up; but stars alive he's wealthy, and that covers a multitude of sins, Pa says."

"Oh, forever Belle! how you talk about Mr. Mincer. I'll bet his ears are burning now."

"Well it's a fact, Nina, and if Ed. Noble was half as rich as Fin Mincer, I'd do my best to cut *you* out, and I'd turn Mincer adrift *too* quick, if Ed. *does* drink to excess and flirt with fast girls occasionally."

"But candidly, Belle, do you really care enough for Mr. Mincer to marry him? I can't believe yo do, from the way you talk about him."

"No, Nina, I *do not*," said Belle, sadly, "Arthur Worthington is the only man I ever really loved, and I know I shall *never love* another as I did *him*. I have regretted a thousand times since the night I refused his manly offer on account of his poverty, that I did not follow the leadings of my heart instead of my foolish pride. But that is all over with now, for he is climbing by his own efforts to an honored position in life, while I shall probably drift off with that brainless Mincer, because he is wealthy and can keep me in high style. But of course *you* will never be poor, for your father is wealthy and he will see that you are grandly started in life, let you marry whom you will. Besides, Edgar will settle down to sober, steady habits, after you are married; at least you can keep him from going to excess."

"Oh, I have no doubt of *that*, Belle, for he told me last week that he was going to swear off New Year's day, and I think he would take the pledge at any time I should urge him to do so. He says he will do anything I ask him to."

“Well, Nina, what more can you ask of a man than that? Of course you can’t ask him to join the church and take a Sunday School class, and turn temperance crank like his uncle, Henry Hartley, before you would marry him.”

“Oh, no, of course I shall not ask any such unreasonable things of him. He would think me a crazy fool if I should. No, Belle, he thinks the world of me, and I know I do of him, and of course he will do anything I ask of him after we are married; besides, I sometimes think it is my *duty* to marry him, to reform him, for he declared he should drink himself to death if I refused him.”

“Then why hesitate longer, Nina? I am sure *I* should not if I were in your place, though all the world opposed.”

“Why, Belle, I’m only seventeen, and Pa and Ma will never give their consent.”

“Oh, well, you can run off and marry without that; besides it is *you*, and not they that will have to live with him, and if you are willing to take your chances, they ought not to object.”

Such advice would have had no weight with Maggie, neither would Belle’s sister, *Nora*, have been guilty of *giving* it. But it is so much easier for the young and inexperienced to follow the leadings of passion, than it is to be governed by their better judgment and the advice prompted by parental love, that thousands have made, and other thousands will continue to make the same sad mistake that Nina Warren did in less than two weeks after the above conversation took place between herself and Belle Blackfoot; for she fled in the night with Edgar to an adjoining State, and sealed her fate

for life by becoming his wife, while she was scarcely more than a child.

Finley Mincer, the young man to whom Belle referred as her "beau," was of a wealthy family of Mincers who lived in Bluffton some thirty miles away. His father, George Mincer, had been unfortunate in business and was on the verge of bankruptcy. His partner, Walter Bentley, was well acquainted with Dr. Blackfoot's family, and he conceived the idea, that if a matrimonial alliance could be effected soon between his partner's son and one of the Doctor's daughters, it might materially aid them in tiding over their present financial strain. So, as young Mincer had met Belle at a ball in Caddo some weeks before, and had told Bentley what a splendid dancer she was, and also showed that he was "desperately smitten" with her, Mr. Bentley advised him to marry her and then come in and take a third partner's interest in the hardware firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co.

"Indeed, I should be very happy to do so," said Fin, "but I hawdly know how so desiwable a featuwe can be brought about. Doctah Blackfoot, I am infawmed is vawy awistocwatic, and also vawy cawful about who his dawtahs keep company with."

"Very well, Fin, I'll manage all that; Doc. Blackfoot likes money as well as any man. I shall see him this week as I have some business in Caddo, and I shall tell him of your prospect of becoming the third partner in our firm as soon as you are married and ready to settle down to business; but of course I shall not intimate that you have ever met his daughter."

So it was arranged that Fin should have the finest turnout that the best livery in Bluffton could furnish, to drive over to Caddo the following Sunday.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARRIED FOR WEALTH.

ONE pleasant Sabbath afternoon, a young man of extremely "dudish" appearance was seen driving into Caddo behind a fine team of beautiful blacks. The eyes of the loafers followed him until he reined up in front of Dr. Blackfoot's residence. He was diminutive in size, with a faint mustache that seemed to beg pardon for the slight shadow it cast over his lip, while the remainder of his face was smooth as that of a boy ten years old; yet he claimed to have passed his twenty-third year. He was also decidedly "pigeon-toed" and bow-legged, which gave him anything but a graceful appearance as he walked, or rather wobbled up to the Doctor's front veranda, holding a diminutive cane in a daintily gloved hand, near the shadow on his upper lip, while his nose glasses gave the finishing touch to this modern "dude."

"Who the devil is that dandy a waltzin' up to Doc.'s now d'ye reckon?" said Joe Gassett. "I'll bet the drinks he's after one of Doc.'s girls."

"Well, I won't bet no drinks," said Josh Slathers, who was just passing the crowd on the corner as Gassett made the above remarks, "but I'll bet ten dollars that he'll get the grand bounce ef he tackles *Nora* fer a ride. She's got too much good hoss sense to ever be ketched a ridin' out with eny sich a durned lookin' cuss as that."

“It may be that *she* will not, but you can bet your bottom dollar that *Belle* will never let a chance slip for riding behind such a fine team as that, even if it was an idiot driving them,” said Jim Burton, who had once been refused the honor of Belle’s company, as he supposed, on account of the lack of elegance in his attire.

“What do you call an idiot, Jim?” said Slathers.

“Why, a natural born fool, of course, or a person void of common sense.”

“Well, ef that don’t strike Fin Mincer ’bout all over, I don’t know what words you could put together as would pictur the durned cuss any better.”

“Fin Mincer? Who the deuce is Fin Mincer?” said Burton.

“Why, that bow-legged, spindle-shanked, devil’s puke, as jist got outen’ that ere fine trottin’ buggy, an’ wobbled up to Doc. Blackfoot’s.”

“Where did you get acquainted with him, Josh?”

“I aint to say much acquainted with him, but I met him here on the street the night afore the last dance at Odd Feller’s hall, an’ he ast me who Belle Blackfoot was, as she was a drivin’ past us on the street, jist as I met him. ‘That’s Doc. Blackfoot’s oldest pullet,’ sez I, ‘but who are you?’ ‘My name is Minsah, sah, of the wealthy firm of Minsah, Bentley & Co., of Bluffton,’ sez he; ‘and I should vewy highly pwize an intwoduction to the Doctah’s daughtah, foah she is suahly a beauty of the first watah.’ ‘Likely ’nough gal,’ sez I, ‘but what claim have you on her?’ ‘My awistocwatic and wealthy position in society, sah, entitles me to an intwoduction to any handsome lady whom I choose to favah with the honahs of my attentions.’ ‘The devil it does,’ sez I, ‘an’ where did ye get that bit of information,’

sez I. An' then he went on with a lot uv stuff 'bout down east Yankees a bein' too green to give an introduction in good society, an' tellin' how rich his father wuz, an' 'bout how many Revolutionary heroes he wuz kin to, an' how many quarts uv blue blood there wuz a sloshin' 'round through his own veins, an' a lot more sich sickinin' stuff, 'till I had to hold my nose an' ast him to 'scuse me 'till I could step across the street an' vomit. But somehow he got an invitation to the ball that night, an' they say he actually danced more'n a dozen sets with Belle; but, *gosh*, I can't see how she stood it."

Mr. Bentley was a prominent Odd Fellow, and on visiting the Caddo lodge shortly after his talk with young Mincer, he managed to get an invitation to Dr. Blackfoot's for tea. This gave him an excellent opportunity for advancing Fin's suit, by incidentally mentioning, while at tea, that as the young man had just finished his high school course, and had shown his ability to drive some sharp bargains, they had decided to give him a third interest in their firm.

Neither the Doctor nor his wife had been at all favorably impressed with young Mincer, yet they had treated him civilly on account of his supposed wealthy connections. But now that he was about to become one of the firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co., he was, in their estimation, entitled to marked respect, and was considered a desirable suitor for Belle's hand. So six weeks after the night Belle Blackfoot first met Finley Mincer at Odd Fellows' hall, she was driven behind the fine team of blacks to Fin's home in Bluffton as Mrs. Belle Mincer. She was not long in learning, however, that the fine team of blacks she had so much admired, belonged

to the proprietor of the leading livery stable in Bluffton, as a bill of twenty dollars for their use on his wedding trip, was left with her during his absence, by one of the livery stable men.

Fin also told his wife that in order to get into the firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co., he would have to raise at least eight thousand dollars more money than he had, as another party, who had the ready cash, was trying to buy in and take this third interest.

While the latter statement was wholly untrue, yet he made his wife believe that Mr. Bentley feared the consequences of permitting Mr. Mincer and his son to get a controlling interest in the firm, and was secretly trying to work one of his own friends into the firm in his stead. He also made his wife believe that a third interest in the firm was worth forty thousand dollars, and asked if she could not induce her father to advance him, as a loan, eight thousand dollars, the amount he said he lacked of having enough to take this third interest; saying he could replace it at almost any time within a few months, if it should be needed. The proposition seemed so reasonable to Belle, that she wrote a long letter to her father, placing matters in even a fairer light, if possible, than Fin had presented them to her, and asking for the amount as a loan, enclosing a note for eight thousand dollars, payable in ninety days, at the Bluffton Bank; the note being signed by her husband, as principal, and endorsed by Mincer, Bentley & Co. She wrote a glowing account of the amount of money the firm had made the past year, and urged her father to be sure to forward a draft for the eight thousand dollars by *return mail*, if he could not come immediately and bring

it, as she feared that Bentley's friend would overreach them and get the stock.

While this was contrary to Dr. Blackfoot's usually cautious method of doing business, yet he determined to risk it in this case, for if the matter had been truly represented, there was no time to lose; moreover, the idea of his son-in-law being superseded by Bentley's friend, for the lack of a little timely help, and that only as a temporary loan, was not to be thought of; and as it was impossible for him to go to Bluffton for some days on account of a lawsuit he then had pending in court, he went immediately to the bank and gave his check for four thousand dollars, and his note of ninety days for four thousand dollars, with the eight thousand dollar note of Mincer, Bentley & Co., as collateral security, in payment for the draft, which he sent to his daughter by first mail.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WEALTHY (?) SON-IN-LAW SPECULATES WITH A
VENGEANCE.

IT does not take long for ninety days to pass. At least this is what the firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co. thought, as they had many other notes to meet besides the one they had endorsed for Fin to Dr. Blackfoot; and as their many creditors began to see that it was only a question of time, as to when the sinking firm would have to succumb, each one seemed determined to collect or secure his claim at maturity; so the result was, an assignment by the firm, with liabilities far beyond their assets. The note given at the Caddo bank as collateral security was consequently an utter loss, and as the Doctor had made no provision for meeting his own note, supposing that the note endorsed by Mincer, Bentley & Co. would be promptly met at maturity, he was placed in an unpleasant dilemma when notified three days before his note of four thousand dollars fell due in the Caddo bank, that the firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co. had failed, and that he would be required to give additional security if he desired further extension of time on his own note. Bitter curses escaped his lips as he read the short note from his banker.

“What does that scape-grace of a son-in-law mean to permit such a crash as this to come up and never notify me of it? Why has Belle failed to mention it in any of her letters? Why did they say nothing about their

impending danger when we were with them only four weeks ago? Curse the luck! I shall go right to Bluffton and see what this all means. Possibly Fin has secured my claim; if so, I shall be all right. I intended to give them the four thousand dollars, but this puts me in a devil of a fix here at the bank, if he has not done this, with the other four thousand dollars to pay, and only three days in which to raise the money. This is the first favor I ever asked of the bank, and d—d if I do not hate most cussedly to be compelled to ask for an extension of time; yet there is nothing I can convert into so much cash on so short notice. But I may as well know the worst to-day as any time.”

So that afternoon found him in Bluffton, in consultation with Fin’s father and Walter Bentley, from whom he soon learned that the firm was hopelessly ruined, and largely from outside speculations on margins, and also by trying to do too large a business for their capital; on account of which the high rate of interest they had for years past been compelled to pay, had more than consumed their profits. He also learned that Fin had only put \$4,000 of the \$8,000 into the firm’s business, and had used the remainder of it in buying wheat through the Chicago board of trade. His first month’s deal had been successful, making him \$500. This so elated him that he reinvested the whole amount, including the \$500, besides an additional amount he had raised in some way, but how, was not clearly explained.

“The probabilities are, then,” said the Doctor, “that his loss in this transaction will be heavy.”

“It cannot be otherwise,” said Bentley, “as the market has been running strongly against him, and the time is nearly up for closing the deal.”

“But, gentlemen,” said Dr. Blackfoot, “you surely can make some arrangement for securing the four thousand dollars of my money that has gone into your business? Of course the four thousand dollars that Fin has gambled away on margins has gone to the devil, and there’s no help for it; but that doesn’t wrong me so much, for I intended to give them that amount as a starter, anyway.”

“We are sorry, Doctor, that we can do nothing to secure your claim. Indeed, it would afford us much pleasure to do so,” said Bentley, “but the First National Bank was carrying us for thirty thousand dollars, and the People’s Bank for twenty-five thousand dollars, and we were compelled to give the two banks a lien on our entire stock and real estate, which of course, places it beyond our power to do anything for you.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said the Doctor, “I think I see in all this, a devilish scheme for downright robbery, and if you refuse to do anything for me, I shall take legal steps to secure my claim, if it puts every d—d one of you in the penitentiary.”

So saying he left them in no pleasant humor, and went back to the home of his son-in-law, where he had first called that afternoon on his arrival at Bluffton, but learning that Fin and Belle were out riding, had, as stated above, called on Messrs. Mincer and Bentley before seeing his children, who in the meantime had returned. Here he found things in a still worse condition than he had even feared. Belle was weeping bitterly as she met her father at the door, and said :

“Oh, Papa, I am so glad you have come, for we are in an awful fix, and I was just going to write you to come. I wish now I had told you all, sooner. But

Fin said to wait and possibly things would turn out better than ——”

Here she broke down completely and could say no more. Fin met his father-in-law with a senseless, sickly grin, saying :

“Well, the jig is up, and the fiddler is to pay. But it seems vewy stwange, how my agent on the Chicago bowd of twade should be so unfowtunate in managing my last business twansactions. They have lost evwy dollah of my money, and moah is called foah.”

This was a little too much for the irate father-in-law, and he indignantly exclaimed :

“Curse your wild gambling speculations, with those Chicago cut-throats. It would have been good enough for you if it had been your own money; but when you lie me out of my money, as you did in getting this eight thousand dollars, that the whole d—d outfit of you have gambled away, you may as well understand first as last that you’ve got the last dollar you’ll ever get from me to gamble on.”

“Oh! my deah sir, you suahly misapwehend the natuah of these twansactions. This is not gambling in the pwopah acceptation of that term. Why, I know sevwal church membews and Sunday School men who deal in mawgins, and they think it is vewy fwee fwom any taint of gambling.”

“Well, Fin, I’m no church member nor Sunday School man either, but I call things by their true name. And when you say that wheat will stand at a certain figure in thirty or sixty days from now, and put four thousand dollars in the hands of a gambling stake-holder to back up your word, you are doing the biggest kind of gambling, and you can’t make anything else out of it.

And I say that any church member that goes into such gambling schemes, is just as big a hypocrite as the devil wishes him to be."

"Oh! my deah sir, you suahly misapwehend how this business is twansacted," said Fin. "It is this way: we meahly ask one of the membews of the bowd of twade to buy or sell so many bushels of gwain for future delivery."

"No, you don't, Fin, you never expect to handle, touch, receive, deliver, nor even see a bushel of that grain. You just simply bet on the future price of it, and, fool-like, bet against another man's game and he holding the winning card in addition to your money. If I were going to try to make money in this way, I should go right to the gambling table at once, for there I should have the whole game right before my eyes. But now I wish to know just what condition you are in, and how you expect to meet your note that falls due next Friday, and which is now in the Caddo bank?"

"Well, my deah sir, I am vewy sowwy to say, I feah I shall have to ask an' extension of the time on that note."

"But how will you meet the interest?"

"O! ah, yes, indeed, I had not thought of that. Well, I guess I shall have to ask for an extension of the time on that, too."

"The devil you will. Don't you know that banks are not in the habit of doing business in that way?"

"Well, fathah, I may as well tell you just what my situation is, although it is vewy embawasing at pwesent to do so. This house we live in belongs to my fathah; but he intended to deed it to me as soon as his affaihs could be stwaightened up. But the stwingency of the

times compelled him to turn evwy thing ovah to the banks that had cawied him so long, and that of course takes owah home. Then, as I had done so well in my first wheat deal, I mortgaged my household furnituah for all the money I could get in that way and put it with the four thousand dollars, and the five hundred dollars I had made in my first deal, into the hands of my agent on the bowd of twade in Chicago, and I have just weceived a lettah fwom him, saying, all is sunk, and calling on me for two hundred and fifty dollars to close the deal."

"Great heavens, man! Then you, too, are worse than bankrupt. You are homeless, moneyless, and in debt besides. What are you going to do to support yourself?"

"Well, weally, I hawdly know, sir; as that is a mat-tah I had thought but vewy little about."

Every expression from his shallow brained son-in-law increased the loathing and disgust that Dr. Blackfoot already felt for this worthless, helpless appendage, which he clearly saw would now be thrown on him for support. So turning to his daughter, he said:

"Belle, you must go home with me. If Fin chooses to follow you he can do so, but what the devil to do with him in Caddo is more than I know. And as it yet lacks two hours of train time, I shall attend to some other business here in Bluffton while you are getting your things ready to go back home with me."

So saying, he took his hat and went to Lawyer Henderson's office, and after clearly stating the whole case, asked him if there would be any legal way of securing, or recovering any part of his claim against the firm of Mincer, Bentley & Co.

“If there is,” said he, “I wish you to take the case and prosecute it to the bitter end.”

“Doctor,” said Henderson, “I have been looking into this matter for other parties, who, like yourself, are heavy losers by this firm, and I find that the banks here have everything covered, and even they, with their first lien, will scarcely be able to recover the entire amounts due them.”

“Then my whole claim has gone to the devil, and I am eight thousand dollars out, and a d—d idiot of a son-in-law into my family for me to support, besides.”

“I am sorry to say, Doctor, that the case appears to be very nearly as you have stated it. Fin, as every one here calls him, has never been trained for any useful employment, has run the streets from a little child, and has no knowledge of any legitimate business. His father, until recently has always kept him well supplied with money; and as he never *earned* a dollar in his life, he knows nothing of the value of money. What you will be able to do with him is more than I can imagine, I assure you.”

CHAPTER XIX.

MINCER HONORS (?) CADDO WITH HIS CANE AND
CITIZENSHIP.

DR. Blackfoot slowly wended his way back from Henderson's office to the home of his son-in-law, bitterly cursing Mincer, Bentley, Fin, and lastly himself, for being such a fool as to favor the marriage of his daughter to such a shallow brained fop, when he knew she really loved and would have married Arthur Worthington, if she had not, from her childhood, been trained to consider the lack of wealth as a mark of disgrace, not to be tolerated in a suitor by any aristocratic lady.

"True," thought he, "Worthington was only a school teacher at the time he sought Belle's hand, but now that he is occupying an honored position as one of the professors in Oberlin College, and possibly will acquire wealth in time, I see I was a fool for opposing it. But this *Fin*; this *worthless, vapid, visionary shadow* of a man, what shall I ever do with him? If we had not blowed so cursed much about his wealth it would not have been so d——d humiliating to have him come back on us now for support. But there's no help for it, and, bitter as the nauseating dose is, we've got to take it."

Belle met him with a faint smile as he entered the door, feeling much happier than she did when he had

first arrived, for she was really glad to know that she was to go back to her old home.

“Fin,” said the Doctor, “you may pack up everything that belongs to Belle, and ship them over to Caddo, and if you see fit to come along with the goods, you can do so. Probably I can find something for you to do there.”

“Why, my deah sir, we have just got evwything packed in the thwee lawge twunks except my cane and what is mawtgaged to Mistah Stwingah, the bwokah, and I pwefer going to-day, if Belle goes.”

The bus had just arrived at the door for the passengers and trunks. The house was locked and the key given to a neighbor, with instructions to let Mr. Stringer have it when called for, and the three were soon whirling over the dusty street to the depot. But just as the party arrived at the station, Fin remembered his cane, which, in the excitement at starting, he had left back at the house. Not knowing what to do with his hands without this ornament, he went back for it, and returned to the depot just in time to see the train move off without him; but the next day found him and his cane in Caddo, where he will probably remain during his life.

This was a busy day for Dr. Blackfoot, as Friday, the day following, his note in the bank must be met in some way; so he was busily engaged until late in the evening, making collections wherever it was possible for him to do so. But three hundred dollars was all he could raise in this way—a mere pittance with which to meet a four thousand dollar note.

Never before had he been placed in such a dilemma; for as the bank had notified him that additional security would be required if he wished an extension of time,

and as he had refused to endorse for so many of the best citizens, for much smaller amounts, he knew of no one acceptable to the bank of whom he dared to ask such a favor. So he decided to ask for an extension of time with a new note, and offer as collateral security the five thousand dollar first mortgage note held on Henry Hartley. Accordingly, he called at the bank the next morning, and asked if the above proposition would be satisfactory.

“Not altogether,” said Mr. Bland, the cashier; “we prefer good personal security; besides, the Hartley note has three years to run yet. Moreover, we dislike putting ourselves in a position which might render it necessary to foreclose this, or any other mortgage.”

“Then you would not take a lien on any of my own property as security?”

“We would rather not, Doctor, if you can give good personal security.”

“As I have refused nearly every good man in Caddo, when asked for similar favors, I fear I shall not be able to give it; but I will make you amply safe by a first lien on any of my property.”

“Well, Doctor, under the circumstances we will make an exception in your case, if you will make the proper assignment of the Hartley note and mortgage to the bank; and we will give you an extension of six months’ time on your note. Perhaps you can convert some of your property into cash by that time.”

So the matter was arranged on the latter plan, and Dr. Blackfoot left the bank, feeling poorer by eight thousand dollars than he did three months before.

CHAPTER XX.

BARRIERS THROWN BETWEEN GEORGE AND NORA.

“What is love, that all the world
Talk so much about it?
What is love, that neither you
Nor I can do without it?”

ANOTHER year has passed, and George Hartley, a dark haired, broad shouldered, “six footer,” of twenty, and Nora Blackfoot, a most beautiful, blue eyed, golden haired blonde of eighteen, present quite a different appearance now, from that which was seen on the streets of Caddo three years before, when the lithe boy of seventeen caught the frightened horse, that was running away with the worse frightened girl of fifteen.

They had not only been playmates, but classmates at school as well, for years. And while neither had ever spoken a word that would indicate feelings of special interest in the other, yet there was an unuttered sentiment of the heart in each, which their eyes only revealed. Ever since George had so bravely risked his life to save her's, the true woman in Nora's heart had been awakened toward him. And as the months and years passed on, his noble, manly bearing toward everyone, had won her admiration and regard to such an extent that he was now enshrined in her heart as the grand idol of her highest earthly affections; while he felt that this beautiful, pure, and truthful girl, had so grown into his heart as to almost form a part of himself. Yet he was pain-

fully conscious that an insurmountable barrier stood between them, which only wealth, either inherited or acquired, could remove.

Nora was comparatively rich, he was poor. Her father was a money lender, his a borrower, and almost hopelessly in debt to the father of the girl he loved. It seemed like obtrusive presumption in him to aspire to her hand, as her parents were proud and aristocratic, and seemed to take delight in making him feel his social inferiority and unworthiness to claim the least attention from any member of their family.

As an illustration of this statement, the Doctor and his wife called to visit the Caddo high school one Friday afternoon. The time after the three o'clock recess was to be devoted to literary exercises by the lyceum. A part of the exercises that afternoon being a dialogue in which George and Nora took prominent parts, they, with Charlie Quigley and Maggie Warren, were in the shade of a large elm near the walk in the school yard, rehearsing their parts, as Doctor and Mrs. Blackfoot entered the yard and passed near them on the way up to the school building.

"Nora," said her father, "come here." Then in an angry tone, intended as much for George's ears as Nora's, said: "If you have no more regard for yourself nor us, than to associate on such familiar terms with paupers and fanatics, we shall take you out of this school and send you to a female seminary, where your teachers will have more care over you than they seem to have here."

"Yes, Nora," said her mother, "we have warned you often enough on this subject. You see what a wreck Belle has made of her whole life and what trouble

she has brought on us all, and you are following right in her footsteps. You are disgracing both yourself and us, by putting yourself on an equality with day laborers."

Too well did Nora know the mind and temper of her parents on this subject to offer a word in defense of George, or even herself, but quietly walked along with them to the school building. When the dialogue referred to was called for, George arose and in a dignified manner, asked to be excused, saying :

"We have not had the opportunity of rehearsing together yet, and for other reasons best known to myself, I shall ask that this exercise be indefinitely postponed."

As he took his seat, he looked across the room to where Nora was sitting, and the bitterly sad expression of her face was mistaken by him for anger and disgust, and as she seemed to avoid him for some days afterward, he felt warranted in the belief that she partook largely of the feelings of her parents against him. This stung him so deeply, that when she shyly came into the recitation room several days after, where he was alone, working on a difficult problem, he abruptly left the room without speaking to her, as he felt sure his company was distasteful to her; and passing out, he gave her a look which she interpreted as meaning, "When I want your company I shall ask for it."

How often it has been that "two loving hearts which should beat as one," have allowed, perhaps through the faults and interference of others, a misunderstood look or word, to build barriers between them, which a lifetime of effort fails to remove.

Nora's parents had forbidden her the privilege of even giving George the slightest recognition, either by word,

look, or pen, under threat that a violation of this requirement would be sufficient reason for their sending her to an eastern boarding school for girls. This Nora dreaded almost as much as being buried alive, and to prevent being banished from home and all she loved, she promised to comply with this unreasonable demand. And, as she was almost daily reminded of this promise, and asked by her parents if she had kept it, she, being neither untruthful nor deceitful, dared not speak to nor recognize George in any manner. As this was so different from her former conduct toward him, it is not strange that a barrier was built up between them, very much as her scheming parents designed there should be. Many noticed the changed conduct of both George and Nora, but no one understood it. No, not even did they themselves.

“Why does he try to avoid me, and look so cold and forbidding as if he *hated* me?” thought Nora.

“What have *I* done?” thought George, “that she never looks at me, if she thinks I am conscious of her presence? And when I have suddenly caught her eye, she quickly turns away as if she was insulted that such as I should even dare to *look* at her. I had fondly believed that she was different from all the rest, and that she was as truly noble and good as she is wonderfully beautiful. But mother must be right, ‘Nora is a Blackfoot,’ as she says, and I fear she has a black and treacherous heart like all the rest. Well, perhaps it is best that I should find her out in good time. I had hoped to be in a position some day to ask for her heart and hand, but that is all over now; for surely if there was ever a hell on earth, it would be in the home of the man who found himself wedded to a false, inconstant,

and treacherous beauty. So, good bye, Nora. You may take your course and I shall pursue mine. Henceforward, our paths in life shall be widely separated, and I now bid you a sad farewell forever."

Thus did George think he could easily smother the flame that had been kindled in his heart by this pure and beautiful girl. But he, like thousands of others, found it much easier to resolve, than to accomplish such an undertaking.

The quick eye of his mother soon detected the true state of his feelings. So one evening when she and George were sitting alone on the sofa, she lovingly laid her arm on his shoulder, and tenderly caressing his dark, curling hair with her fingers, as she looked the question into his sad eyes that she would not ask, feeling that, near as is a mother to her son, there are, at times, secret recesses in his heart into which even *she* may not enter unbidden.

But, looking down into his mother's loving eyes, he saw there a warm and tender sympathy, that his own heart was bleeding for, and clasping her in his arms, he sobbed out, as the tears came in his manly eyes:

"Mother, you are the only really good and true woman in the world. I can trust you and tell you all. I now see that you are right, 'Nora is a Blackfoot,' as you said, and she avoids me for no other reason than that I am poor. I could have seen her buried a month ago and gone on in my life work with far less bitterness in my heart than I now have with the consciousness that she is false, fickle and proud, and that she hates me *only because I am poor*. Why have I been so blind? Why have I loved her so dearly and she so unworthy? Is it

such a crime to be poor, mother, when every honest effort has been put forth to acquire wealth?"

"No, my son, a thousand times no. Besides, you are rich, George, in pure, true, noble, manly virtue, which *should be*, and *is* worth far more to every *true woman*, than all the wealth of the world could be to her without it. I should far rather know that you would live and die an honest *poor* man, than that you should acquire wealth by dealing, (as her father does,) in that which brings, not only poverty, degradation and death to your fellow man, but also final sorrow and ruin to your own soul. Nora is wholly unworthy of you, if she discards you because you lack wealth. God rules the world, George, and the time may come when you will be as far above her, even in the scale of wealth, as she now feels herself above you."

"I know, mother, that you have always taught me that God rules the world, but of late I have been sorely tempted to doubt it. Why does He let such a man as Doc. Blackfoot prosper and lord it over the poor as he has done so long here in Caddo? It seems to me more like the devil has ruled here of late."

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence,
He hides a smiling face."

were the beautiful words repeated by his mother.

"Well, mother, we have been praying for years that we might be delivered from this thralldom of debt to Blackfoot, but it seems we are no nearer out of his clutches than we were years ago. In fact, we are more than three years nearer the time when we shall be com-

pelled to give up our home and farm to this grasping miser, even if we are able to keep the interest paid at maturity for that length of time, and I am almost beginning to hate him."

"George, the Psalmist says, 'Fret not thyself because of evil doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, for they shall be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb.' And it now appears that some of Dr. Blackfoot's troubles are coming home to him, for he has recently lost eight thousand dollars in some way, through his reckless son-in-law, we are told."

"Yes, mother, but that doesn't amount to much for him. He can lose all of that, and his wealth be less affected than ours would be by the loss of fifty dollars. Besides, it will only make him all the more oppressive towards the poor until he regains it. Then, what hope is there for us in that direction any way? For if he should lose everything, that would not pay off our debt, and as it will be impossible for us to clear five thousand dollars beside our interest, taxes, and other living expenses, in the next three years, from the products of the farm, I have no hope but that we shall soon be homeless and almost friendless."

"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.

"I have been young, and now am old, yet never have I seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread," were the next texts quoted from God's Word by his mother.

"I believe you have a text for almost everything, mother, and your simple faith and confiding trust in God inspires me to more earnest, noble deeds for your

sake. Oh, if Nora could only be brought to see God's hand in everything as you do, and could be made to see merit in something else beside money, I should have everything to live for."

"Commit thy way unto the Lord : trust also in Him ; and He shall bring it to pass.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord ; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.' Could you ask for fuller or richer promises, George?"

"God bless you, mother, you have shown me a rift in the dark cloud, that for weeks has hung over me. I do sincerely thank God for these glorious promises that you have quoted for me from His blessed Word. I have read them many times before, but never until they were spoken by your dear lips to me, had I comprehended their deep meaning ; and though Nora may be a Black-foot, yet God's grace can make her as pure and true, as she is beautiful, and I shall never cease to ask this boon from His hand."

"I do not wish to mislead you, George," said his mother, for

"It may not be my way,
It may not be thy way,
Yet in His own way
The Lord will provide."

If we ask in faith, not forgetting to do our part, and then leave the result with God, He will bring all out for the best for us at last. This has been the experience of His trusting children in all ages, my son, and it would surely be displeasing to Him if you or I should doubt His loving care over us now, even though we may not be able to see how He will deliver us from the rapacity

of those who would crush us and drive us from our beautiful home; nor how the hearts of those who have been turned from us, may be brought nearer than ever to us again."

"Dear mother, I believe you; and now I can trust that God will, in His own time, give me the desires of my heart; for surely He would never let me love Nora so dearly, if she is never to be mine."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE DANCE THAT WAS TURNED INTO A SERVICE OF SONG.

“Hast thou asked of God a blessing,
Which he seemeth to deny ;
Keep on asking, keep on praying
He will answer by and by.”

THAT the reader may more clearly understand Nora's position, we must go back to the day that she went into the recitation room where George was alone working on his difficult problem. She had for days hoped that he would speak first, so that she could have an excuse for violating her parents' unreasonable command. But he was so sure she did not wish him to do so, that he determined on letting her make the first advance. He had also been much in the company of Maggie Warren in the meantime, as he wished to disguise his feelings by being unusually lively, and attentive to her whenever Nora was present. That afternoon he walked home with Miss Warren from school, while Nora and other girls of her class followed just behind them as they left the school yard, but neither he nor Maggie took any notice of Nora or the other girls on their way homeward. Maggie had long been an admirer of George Hartley, but knowing Nora's feelings toward him, and supposing they were fully reciprocated by young Hartley, she had not dared hope that she could ever become a successful rival of Nora Blackfoot.

Poor Nora! the last avenue of approaching George now seemed to be closed, for there was no one except Maggie to whom she had ever confided the sacred feelings of her heart with reference to him, and now *she* was proving treacherous, and doing all in her power to win him from her, and possibly telling him every word she had ever spoken to her in confidence.

“Oh!” sobbed she, as she buried her face in her pillow that night, “Oh! if I only had one friend to whom I could go for sympathy, and in whom I could confidently trust, it would not be so hard to bear. It seems that I have no father, no mother, no brother, no sister, nor even friend to whom I dare unburden my heart. I once thought George loved me, or at least respected me, but now I see he dislikes me; but even if this is not the case, how am I ever to know what has caused him to treat me so coldly? Oh! for one true, sympathizing friend in whom I could fully trust.”

Could George have looked into her heart that night and seen the heavy burden which this rich, *yet poor girl*, was compelled to bear all alone, with not even a *friend*, much less a sympathizing *mother*, to whom she dared go for consolation or advice, he would have considered *his* burden of poverty light indeed to bear.

Although Nora had always been a good girl, and for the past two years a true Christian and consistent member of the Methodist church, yet in this, her darkest hour, she was so completely crushed, that she felt it would be impossible for even God to help her carry her heavy burden; and many days and nights passed before light broke in upon her troubled soul.

The very evening that George was pouring out his troubles to his noble sympathizing mother, Nora's par-

ents were preparing for a dance in their parlor, having previously sent out invitations to some of the most boisterous young ladies and gentlemen in Caddo, as well as a few of the more refined, with a view to bringing back her wonted sprightly cheerfulness.

“We are going to have a dance here to-morrow evening, Nora,” said her mother, “and we have invited the jolliest young ladies and gents in town to be here, and shall expect you to give us some of your liveliest music on the piano.”

“You haven’t invited Maggie Warren, have you?” said Nora.

“Why do you ask that child?”

“Because she is angry with me, and I do not wish to see her here.”

“Why, certainly, we invited her; you were always such great friends we could not think of omitting her. Besides, the Warrens are the wealthiest family in town.”

Nora’s cup of bitterness was now full to overflowing, and having no earthly friend to whom she could go for sympathy, she was driven to that all pitying Friend, who invites every troubled, heavy laden soul to come to Him for rest. So going to her room, she poured her sorrows into His sympathizing ear and there found sweet relief.

The following evening when the young company began gathering in for the dance, she seemed cheerful and much like her former self, giving each a cordial greeting. Her parents had spared no pains on her musical education, and she was recognized by all as far the finest pianist in Caddo. When she accompanied the instrument with her sweet, clear, bird-like voice, the strains seemed almost angelic. But her heart was

not attuned to dancing music that evening, and when they called her to the piano, and asked for one of the liveliest dancing tunes, she modestly declined, saying :

“ You will please excuse me for not playing that this evening, and I will give you another, which I think we shall all like better.”

“ Certainly,” said Eva Linton, one of the best dancers in Caddö. “ Your selections are always the best,” and as Nora started to the piano, the cotillion began forming on the floor for the dance. But never was a company of young gentlemen and ladies more completely dumfounded, than when Nora’s clear, sweet voice accompanied her grand instrument with the pathetic hymn :

“ Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow Thee ;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shalt be.

“ Perish every fond ambition,
All I’ve sought, or hoped, or known ;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own.”

Ella Kirby, a rather fast, rattling young girl, began to sneer and laugh, saying :

“ That tune might do for a Quaker or Methodist to dance, but I can’t quite get the step.”

“ Give us something lively like ‘ Old Hundred,’ ” said Jim Burton, sneeringly, as he wished to make himself very agreeable to Miss Kirby, and forgetting that no *gentleman* could be so rude while there as an invited guest.

“ For shame, Burton, keep still. I never heard such sweet, plaintive music in my life,” said Rob Johnson, as

he gave the signal for all to be seated ; and as he was considered rather a leader in good society, it took but a moment for his example to be followed by all the rest. Although Nora was fully conscious of the ridicule her course had provoked, yet not for a moment did she waver from her purpose to sing the hymn through ; and her clear, sweet, but wonderously plaintive voice continued :

“ Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Savior too ;
Human hearts and looks deceive me ;
Thou art not, like them untrue.

“ And while Thou dost smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends may scorn me ;
Show Thy face, and all is bright.”

Nora's piano seemed to almost speak the beautiful words with her, and there was something so grand and touchingly pathetic in the voice of the singer, as she clearly articulated every syllable of this beautiful hymn, that other eyes were filled with tears beside those of Rob Johnson and Maggie Warren, who had been first on the floor for the dance, but who were the first to lead the company to their seats. Even Ella Kirby found use for her handkerchief ere the singer finished the closing stanzas :

“ Man may trouble and despise me,
'Twill but drive me to Thy breast ;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.

“ Oh ! 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While Thy love is left to me ;
Oh ! 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with Thee.’

There was no dancing in Dr. Blackfoot's parlor that night, for scarcely had the grand strain of song died away, before Rob Johnson called for another hymn that he had heard her sing once before.

"Yes, certainly," said Nora, "but as you all know that hymn, you will please join in with me, since it is so much nicer with all the parts carried. You'll all help me, won't you?"

Such an invitation from the lovely girl was not to be declined, and in a moment more the company that had met for the dance, were standing around the piano mingling their voices with her's in singing the grand old hymn:

"What a friend we have in Jesus;
All our sins and griefs to bear;
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer."

When this was finished, the hymn at the beginning of this chapter was called for, and then another and another, until more than an hour had been spent in singing choice, beautiful songs and hymns, after which another hour was spent in games, charades, etc., and when the company parted that night, they were unanimous in declaring that it had been the happiest evening they had ever enjoyed at Dr. Blackfoot's mansion.

But that which did Nora more good than anything else, was the warm kiss that Maggie Warren gave her as she bade her good night on the veranda, and said:

"God bless you, Nora, I shall never forget this evening. Come and see me soon, won't you? I have so much that I now wish to talk with you about. I know

I'm a real naughty, wicked girl; but you surely will forgive me when you know how sorry I am."

"I have more to ask forgiveness for than you, Maggie," said Nora, and again and again did their tear-wet cheeks press each other, in their goodnight parting embrace, while heaven witnessed the unspoken sealing of an abiding friendship between these two lovely girls, more binding than that of common sisterhood.

CHAPTER XXII.

BANISHED FROM HOME AND FRIENDS.

“NORA,” said Dr. Blackfoot, as his daughter re-entered the parlor after bidding Maggie Warren good-night on the veranda, “Nora, this must be the last time we have such performances in our parlor as you have brought about this evening. It is a shameful disgrace to us, for any one passing along the street would think we had all turned shouting Methodists.”

“Why, Papa, I think we all enjoyed ourselves splendidly, and I am sure I feel much happier than I should if we had turned the evening into such a carousal as we had here just before Belle was married. You know that more than one young man went home drunk that night, and even Ella Kirby made a spectacle of herself, she was so much intoxicated. But after we all began singing this evening she behaved like a lady.”

“All this has nothing to do with what I have to say to you, Nora, and I now give you fair warning, to *let this be the last time* you turn our house into a Methodist singing service. Do you understand me?”

Nora knew better than to argue farther with her father when he was angry, so quietly answered,

“Yes, sir.”

“And another point, Nora, that I wish settled now is this: You must stop going to that d——d Methodist Church and Sunday-school. I see it is making a fool of you. You may go to theaters, balls and all other

suitable places of entertainment for a young lady to attend, as often as you like, but never again to that church and Sunday-school. The preacher and superintendent are no friends to us, nor to our business, and I don't intend they shall make fools of my children."

"Papa," sobbed Nora, almost overcome with emotion, "you know I have always tried to be an obedient girl, and to do all I could to please you and mamma. But when I joined the church, I took upon myself a solemn vow that I would be true to all requirements of a consistent Christian life. That vow, I dare not break; and let the consequences to me be what they may, I cannot give up the church and Sunday-school, for, by so doing, I should deny and displease my Savior, and this I cannot do, to please even you, papa."

Never before had Nora spoken so firmly in opposition to her father's wishes, and he determined to crush the "spirit of rebellion," as he termed it, in his daughter at once, so he replied:

"Nora, you *shall* give them up, or you shall leave here until you come to your senses. There is a boarding school in New York where such girls as you can be managed, when they become too smart to be controlled at home."

For a moment Nora's heart sank within her, as she felt that this was to be banishment from home and all she held most dear, and doubly so now that she knew Maggie was again her friend. But only for a moment did she waver in her purpose to be true to her vows, which she consciously felt were recorded in heaven. So turning to her father, who was sitting on the sofa beside her, and laying her hand lovingly on his shoulder, said:

"Papa, you know I love you, and wish to do all I

can to please you, but when I remember that Jesus loved us all so well that he suffered the most shamefully cruel death for us, I cannot knowingly displease him; no, not even to please you, papa. So if you think best to send me away from home on this account, I shall go as cheerfully as I can, without a murmur. But I very much prefer remaining at home if you will let me."

"Then you refuse to comply with my wishes?"

"I cannot break my vows, papa, even though you drive me from home for refusing."

"Then, Nora, your school days in Caddo are ended, and two weeks more will find you in the young ladies' boarding school in Albany, New York, where you shall remain until you are willing to comply with my wishes."

"I think you had better comply now, Nora," said her mother. "You will never find an easier time."

"I cannot, Mamma; please do not urge me further," said Nora, as the tears coursed faster than ever down her lovely cheeks.

The mother's quick insight had detected Nora's warm attachment for George Hartley, and as both she and her husband were determined to break off this attachment, if possible, they had previously agreed that sending her away to school would be the best plan for accomplishing their object. So on this occasion the matter was definitely settled that Nora should go within two weeks, many hundreds of miles from home to the Albany boarding school for girls. Nora's feelings may be better imagined than described as she retired to her room that night. That she had been harshly dealt with by her parents she fully realized, yet not a feeling of anger or resentment did she harbor for a moment against them.

A light from an upper window of the house of Mr.

Hartley, over on the hillside, could be plainly seen from her own window. Often before had she cast her eyes toward the light that shone from that window, as she knew that one dearer than life to her occupied that room; yet never before had she felt such a longing desire to know the thoughts of its occupant.

“Oh, if I only knew before I go so far away what his feelings are toward me,” sobbed she. “If I could only know that he is not angry with me, and that he would sometimes think kindly of me at least. I must see Maggie Warren to-morrow, and learn, if possible, from her why he treats me so coolly.”

Just then the light was extinguished in George Hartley’s room. Nora turned away from the window and began singing in a low, sweet, plaintive voice, a part of one of the hymns she had sung with her friends that evening:

“I bring my grief to Thee,
The grief I cannot tell;
No words shall needed be,
Thou knowest all so well.
I bring the sorrows laid on me,
O, loving Savior! all to Thee.”

From this her thoughts were turned to her Bible, and opening to the 27th Psalm, she read:

“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear. The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”

This whole Psalm was full of consolation to her, but the 4th, 5th, 8th and 10th verses were especially rich in new meaning and comfort that night; and as she read the words, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up,” she felt that God

was indeed very near to her, and that his sustaining love was now more precious than ever before. So she then, on bended knee, renewed her vows to be true to her God, even though all earthly friends should forsake her. Then with a feeling that she had willingly, intelligently, and trustingly placed her hand practically in that of her loving Savior, to be led by Him through life, she arose from her knees with the sweet song of praise welling up from the depths of her soul :

“ Here I give my all to Thee—
Friends and time and earthly store ;
Soul and body Thine to be,
Wholly Thine for evermore.”

This hymn had a new meaning to her now, and while she sang the last three stanzas as she laid her head on her pillow, she realized the precious nearness of her Savior as never before. Soon she fell into a sweet sleep, from which she did not awaken until the morning song of the robin, in an apple tree near her window, reminded her that another day had dawned.

CHAPTER XXIII.

TWO LOVELY GIRLS AND A PARTIAL REVELATION.

EARLY the next afternoon Nora called on her friend, Miss Warren, who met her, as formerly, with a loving kiss, saying:

“Oh, I am so glad you have come, Nora; I’ve been thinking of you all day. But let’s go to the hammock under the apple tree, as I wish to be with you alone for a while.”

This was readily agreed to, and the two lovely girls were soon seated in the hammock, where they were free from interruption.

“Why have you staid away so long, Nora? I feared you were offended until you treated me so kindly last evening. Now please tell me all,” said Maggie, as she lovingly encircled her friend with her arm.

“Maggie, I love every one now,” said Nora; “and you more than any other girl in the world. But I have had much to trouble me of late; much that I could tell to no earthly friend. Papa and mamma decided last night to send me away to the young ladies’ boarding school in Albany, New York, and I would so much prefer to remain at home and go to school here.”

“Send you away to Albany, New York, Nora! Pray why do they wish to send you so far away? There are certainly plenty of good schools nearer home.”

“You asked me to tell you all, Maggie, and as I now consider you one of my truest friends, I shall do so.

Papa and mamma dislike the whole Hartley family, chiefly because Mr. Hartley has so strongly opposed the liquor business. And as he is class leader and superintendent of the Sunday-school, and frequently prays and exhorts earnestly on this subject, they think he is throwing his whole influence strongly against their interests. I think they also fear that there is danger of an attachment springing up between George and myself, and they know we can meet at church and Sunday-school, although you know he scarcely ever even *looks* at me when we do meet. So last evening after you all left, papa forbade my singing or playing any more of our church hymns for company, and also said I must not go to church or Sunday-school any more. To this of course I could not agree. Then papa said that my school days in Caddo were ended, and that I should go to that girls' school in New York. Maggie, this at first seemed more than I could bear, as it would be driving me off among strangers, hundreds of miles away from all that I love and hold most dear. Then I have no idea how long they will keep me there; possibly for years. You and George, as well as all the other boys and girls of our class, will doubtless be married or gone away when I am permitted to return, and you will then care but little for me. For a moment I was tempted to give up the church, the Sunday-school, and everything else good, and be as wild and reckless as Ella Kirby. But when I remembered what my loving Savior had suffered for me; how He was denied, cast out, and even spit upon, and then most cruelly murdered by the chosen people whom He had especially come to bless, I said: 'Papa, I should deny my Saviour in complying with your request, and this I cannot do, let the consequences

be what they may to me.' But papa was determined on carrying his point, so I am to start in two weeks to Albany, to be away from Caddo and those I love most dearly, I know not how long. But, Maggie, I went to my room after it was settled that I should go, and there I found such sweet comfort, in reading the 27th Psalm, as I never before knew. It seemed to me that my dear Savior was in my room, and that I could lay my hand in his, with the fullest assurance that He would lead me all the way through life, and shield me from the dangers and pitfalls into which so many are led, who refuse His guiding hand."

"Oh, Nora," said Maggie, "I wish I were half as good and true as you are to your convictions of duty. Nora, I'm a wicked, selfish girl. I knew your parents were talking of sending you away somewhere to school, and a week ago I almost hoped they would. I knew that George Hartley used to think more of you than any other girl in Caddo, but since this coldness between you has appeared, he has been quite friendly toward me. But when I asked him last evening if he was invited, with others, to your party, such a pained expression came over his countenance as I can never forget, as he replied: 'Maggie, you know that such paupers as I, are never invited nor wanted there. Even Nora, who used to at least treat me kindly, scarcely deigns to look at me now, that she is a young lady and sees the vast difference in our social positions.' 'But, George,' said I, 'you may be too hasty in your conclusions; there may be other reasons for her coldness toward you.' 'No,' said he, 'you can't deceive me in that way. Girls nowadays care for nothing but wealth and display. I used to think Nora was an exception to this rule, but

my eyes are open now, and I have resolved never to marry any one. I shall bend my efforts to the utmost in fitting myself for an honorable profession, by which I can at least secure a competency in life, yet I have little hope of ever acquiring wealth. My uncle, George Wentworth, of Cincinnati, has offered me a clerkship in his large hardware store there, provided I can begin work with him next week. Although the salary is small, yet, as I am to board in his family, it will leave me a small surplus above expenses, and I have just written him that I should accept his offer. I have already begun the study of medicine, and as I shall not have to work of evenings, I shall have fully as much time for study as I have had here at home, and in a few months I shall be ready to take at least a part of the course of lectures, which my uncle says he will give me time to attend. Mrs. Dr. Truworthy has been very kind to me, and has loaned me several of her standard works, besides giving me much good advice and many valuable suggestions, which have helped me materially in my studies. She and my mother are two of the best women who ever lived, and if I ever make a success in life, I shall owe it to their motherly and Christian influence.' 'I have no doubt, George,' said I, 'but that you will make a grand success in life, even though you do lack the financial advantages of many young men. But as to your determination never to marry, fie! George,' said I, 'that's all nonsense. You will meet some pretty face in the city and be dead in love with her before you know it. Then the next thing we Caddo girls see in the city papers, will read like this: 'Married, at the elegant home of the bride's parents, Dr. G. W. Hartley, to the beautiful and accomplished Miss Flora Silklace Golden.'"

“What did he say to that, Maggie?” asked Nora, who was a far more eager listener than Maggie supposed.

“He said I did not know what I was talking about. ‘No, Maggie,’ said he, ‘I shall never marry. I consider that the holiest and most sacred tie that is ever made on earth, and I could never enter into that relation with any girl, though she were beautiful and lovely as an angel, unless I could give her the undivided affections of my heart, regardless of her wealth or social position; neither would I *then*, without the most positive evidence, that she in return yielded her whole heart to me, not for the position in life I might be able to give her, but for *myself alone*. And as there *are* no girls now who take the view of marriage that I do; none who would enter it from the *purest* and *most unselfish* motives, I tell you candidly, Maggie Warren, *I shall never marry*.’ ‘George Hartley,’ I replied, ‘you are too sweeping in your judgment of our sex, if you really think there are no girls who have any higher motives in matrimony than you give us credit for. ’Tis true, there are too many who marry for wealth and position alone. But I know there are some girls, who, like yourself, consider this the holiest and most sacred earthly tie, and who would rather die than marry a man whom they did not devotedly love, and that too for *himself* and *his own true manhood*, regardless of the number of dollars or acres he might possess.’ ‘*You may think* so, Maggie,’ said he, ‘but I do not, and I have settled that point in my mind.’ These were his final words to me last evening before I started for your party.”

“Maggie, I said I would tell you all, but I have not yet done so. I supposed that you and George would sometime marry, and possibly long before I am per-

mitted to return from the New York boarding school. If you do, I shall pray that you may both be truly happy. But you will write me, Maggie, and tell me all about it, and when the wedding is to be, will you not?"

"Nora, *that well never be*. George Hartley either loves some one else, or he will never love any one well enough to marry, and I am sure that no motive except the purest and most devoted affection for the woman of his choice, would ever move him in that direction; and further, I more than half believe you are the only girl he ever dreamed of marrying."

"Why do you think so, Maggie? Did he ever intimate to you that he cared anything for me?"

"Not in words, Nora; but I have often noticed his eyes following you when he thought no one was conscious of his looks or acts, and you know a girl's eye is quick to read love's language. If he were wealthy, you would find him a bold and persistent suitor, unless I have greatly missed my guess. But if he were thrice a millionaire, he would scorn to accept even *your* hand, if he were not also sure of your *heart* with it."

"Oh, Maggie," said Nora, as the glad tears came in her eyes, "if I only knew that George cared half so much for me as I do for him, before I leave to be gone so long, I could be comparatively happy in my banishment. I do love him, and have loved him ever since he so boldly risked his life to save mine in that fearful runaway, and he has been constantly growing into my affections, until now he seems to be a part of my very being. But how am I to know what his feelings are toward me? He never gives me a chance to speak to him, and he has never written a word to me; then if you should tell him what I have said to you he would

despise me more than ever; so I shall extort this pledge from you as my truest friend, that you will never reveal one word of our conversation to him, or any one else, until I give you permission to do so. Will you promise me this, Maggie?"

"Certainly, Nora, I'll promise anything you ask of me; but if I were you, I should drop him a friendly note at least before leaving, telling him where you are going, for I am sure he will give you a manly answer."

"While it seems to me that this is hardly the proper thing for me to do, Maggie, as he surely would have given some token of his desire to be friendly with me, if such is the case, yet I cannot leave without having this matter definitely settled, as to whether he is angry with me or not. I shall therefore write, and will then tell you whether the answer is favorable or not,"

As the girls were then called into the house by Mrs. Warren, nothing further was said on the subject until they parted down at the front gate in the evening, when Nora asked Maggie to renew her promise to say nothing to any one about the matter they had been so intently discussing that afternoon. But having already referred to Mrs. Dr. Truworthy, and favors extended by her to young Hartley, we must introduce her to the reader before following Nora farther.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A MODERN PHARISEE.

CADD0 had several other doctors beside Dr. Blackfoot, but we have no occasion for mentioning more than two of them at present—Dr. J. M. Buckwether and Dr. Mary F. Truworthy.

Dr. Buckwether had formerly been a Methodist preacher, but on account of irregular and disreputable conduct, which had been reported to the church by some of the prominent ladies of his charge, the Conference refused to give him an appointment, and he was thus thrown on his own resources for support. He was a college graduate, and an excellent scholar, his father having given him every advantage that money could procure. So, after attending a few courses of lectures at an eastern medical college, he began writing his name J. M. Buckwether, M. D., instead of D. D., and soon opened an office on Main street, with his name, followed by the M. D., in bright gilt letters on the door.

Dr. Mary F. Truworthy was equally as well educated; she, too, being not only a college graduate, but also a graduate in medicine from an eastern college of high repute. But she had been compelled to earn the money by teaching, to defray her expenses through college, as she had been left an orphan at ten years of age, with less than five hundred dollars inheritance; and through the bad management of her gaurdian, she received but little benefit from this.

Drs. Buckwether and Blackfoot had been practicing several years in Caddo before Dr. Truworthy located there; and while the former M. D.'s were rivals in the general practice of medicine, yet they were in perfect harmony in ridiculing Mrs. Dr. Truworthy, whenever and wherever they could get listeners, as "the petticoat doctor," or "the strong-minded *she* doctor," &c. Of this, however, she apparently took no notice, but went quietly along in a most lady-like manner, making friends of nearly all classes of people with whom she came in contact, and gradually worked into a large and lucrative practice.

Both Dr. Buckwether and Dr. Truworthy were professors of religion, but the latter was much the more modest and quiet in her claims to Christian perfection. Often a poor widow or washerwoman's heart did she gladden by making her bill extremely light for services rendered, and in many other really deserving cases, no charge at all was made, but on the contrary some pecuniary aid given in such a modest, loving way, that many a "God bless you, Doctor," from truly thankful hearts, was richer pay to her, than double the regular fee for her services could have been. But she was always firm in collecting the regular fee, if the patient was able to pay it.

On the contrary, Dr. Buckwether was not only exorbitant in his charges, but also relentless in collections; and if any distinction was shown between the rich and the poor, it was generally in favor of the former, as he fully believed in making friends of the "mammon of unrighteousness." But he could pray the loudest and longest of any one in Caddo, and his prayers took in the widest possible range of territory and subjects, (ex-

cepting only himself.) He prayed for the poor and oppressed; for the sick and afflicted; the sinners that were out of the church; the benighted and idolatrous heathens in Africa, China, Hindostan, Australia, Corea, South America, Mexico, the South Sea Islands, the Islands of the Pacific, and Greenland, Iceland, and throughout the Arctic and Antarctic regions generally; and would then remind the Almighty that if there had been any subject, territory, island, country or object that he had overlooked or failed to mention in his prayer, he hoped the Lord would look after the matter and see that none of them were slighted, or words to that effect; and then rounded up by giving the Almighty a great deal of valuable information about the great amount of sin that was going on in our own country, especially amongst the young and unconverted, but strangely enough, always forgetting to mention any sin in particular, or to include himself in the number of those who might need to ask pardon for sins committed, or return thanks for unnumbered blessings already received. He seemed to think that this was a good general purpose prayer, that took in so nearly every object and every locality that it would be considered first-class for any and all occasions, and he was always happy to be called on to deliver it. But it became rather monotonous in time to his hearers; so one day when he had been called on to close the services with a word of prayer, and had gone about half through this harangue to the Almighty, Josh Slathers, in deep disgust, took his hat and walked with heavy footfalls out of the church, and started home. He had only gone a few steps from the door, however, when he met Mr. Warren, who asked him if he was sick, or why he left church before it closed.

"Sick, Mr. Warren? I should say I am sick, and I think everybody else in the church is, except Doc. Buckwether. Why he's a sawin' off that same ole forty mile prayer of hissen that he's spouted here more'n a hundred times, an' he's only got to Australia in it now; an' I was so cussid tired an' hungry, I couldn't stand it no longer, fer I kin go home an' have my dinner et afore he'll git that durned yarn 'at he calls a prayer, all rounded up an' ready to tack on his amen. I tell you, Mr. Warren, the Lord'll have to have a mighty good memory, ef he recollects so cussid long a prayer as that, enyhow."

"I fear you are rather irreverent, Mr. Slathers," said Mr. Warren; "you should not speak so lightly of religious matters."

"There may be a cussid sight of *Buckwether* religion in all that slosh he's a gitten emptied outen him, but I think tha'de be a durned sight more *Christianity* in his tryin' to help some uv the poor washerwomen he's charged sich all-fired big prices fer doctorin'."

"But don't you think Dr. Buckwether has any religion, Mr. Slathers?"

"That's jist what's the matter with him, Mr. Warren; he's got too *durned much religion*, an' not enough *Christianity* mixed in it to color the water. Why, don't you know, the ole hypocritical cuss tuck the widder Smith's last cow, fer checkin' three uv her children through to kingdom come, er what's 'bout the same thing, a doctorin' 'em to death?"

"Well, he says he *saved* the oldest child, Mr. Slathers; and of course she would cheerfully make any sacrifice to have even *one* of her children saved."

"Saved, the devil! No he didn't, Mr. Warren. That child never would take a durned drop uv his medicine,

an' he was the sickest one of the pile to start on. Why, by Judas, man! ef Doc. Buckwether had a tuck *half* the pizen stuff hissself that he sloshed down them three innercent little children, an' a kept clean away from 'em, tha'd a bin one long grave over yander on the hill 'stid uv three short ones, I kalkilate."

"Yes, I know it did seem rather hard-hearted to take her last cow, Mr. Slathers; but perhaps the Doctor did the best he knew, under the circumstances, and felt *justified* in collecting his bill for services rendered."

"*Justified!*" said Slathers; "yes, I 'spose he did. He talks a cussid sight 'bout bein' *justified* an' sanctified, an' says he ha'int bin mad nor committed no sin fer ten years; an' to hear *him* talk, you'd think the pin feathers was a sproutin' out on his shoulders, where his angel wings was a startin' fer him to fly off to glory halleluyer with. But I kalkilate he'll find the widder Smith's cow a standin' at Father Abraham's gate 'bout the time he gits up there, with her head down an' her tail up, ready to gin him a lift over into the alkali an' brimstone country. But, listen! he's jist a gittin' to Greenland now in his prayer, an' he'll begin to draw the puckerin' string an' plaster on the amen in about seven or eight minnits; so I'll be a goin' er I'll not git much uv my dinner et afore his prayer weights git run down."

The reader must not suppose that Dr. Buckwether was often called on to close the services with prayer. But he was one of the class mentioned of old, who loved to be heard for their much speaking, and was always on the alert for an opportunity to gratify this desire.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN ACCIDENT.—SLATHERS PREACHES A SERMON.

AUNT Sally Bennett, as every one called her, was a worthy old widow lady who lived in the country two miles from Caddo. She was eighty years old, but very active; much more so than many young ladies of one-fourth her age. She was a splendid horse-back rider, and rode in this way from her home to market, almost every week, with her butter and eggs. Just as she was turning a street corner in coming into town one day, a large dog jumped out at her horse and frightened it, causing it to jump suddenly sideways, so that she was thrown off backward, with her basket of eggs under her, and was so badly stunned that she was taken up for dead and carried into the nearest house.

Dr. Truworthy was called in, and after a few moments of careful examination, became satisfied that life was not extinct, but advised having some other doctor called for consultation.

As it so happened that all of the other physicians, except Dr. Buckwether, were at that time out of town, Mr. Johnson, who had helped to carry the injured woman in from the street, was asked if he would go for Dr. Buckwether.

“Certainly,” said he, “but I very much doubt the propriety of calling him in her case, as I know Aunt Sally would not have him about her if she knew what she was doing.”

But he was soon in Dr. Buckwether's office, with the summon for his immediate attendance in consultation with Dr. Truworthy, in the case of Mrs. Bennett.

"I should be glad to lend my services in the case, Mr. Johnson, if I could consistently do so. But according to the code of medical ethics, I could not, while that petticoat doctor has anything to do with the case. If you will unconditionally dismiss her, I will cheerfully take charge of the case; or I will serve in consultation with any *gentleman* doctor of *my school*."

"But, Doctor," said Mr. Johnson, "there is no time to lose in such a case as this; and it seems to me you are permitting the technicalities of your code to influence you too far, when it may result in the loss of life."

"Not at all, Mr. Johnson; the dignity of our profession demands it. I will, however, in *this case*, go to the house where the wounded lady is, with the express understanding that Mrs. Truworthy retire from the sick room until I can examine the case."

"Very well, Doctor, I will go back and see if this arrangement will be satisfactory; and if so, will return and let you know."

The case still seemed so grave, that Dr. Truworthy was not willing to assume all the responsibility of the consequences which might follow, as she feared there was serious internal injury; so she agreed to leave the room long enough for this dignified (?) M. D. to examine the sufferer, as she now seemed to be regaining consciousness. Accordingly, Dr. Buckwether was again notified, and he called with his medicine case, and after spending some time in examining the still partially unconscious sufferer, was unable to discover what, or where the trouble was, but as he thought *something* must be done

he called for a spoon and gave her a large dose of castor oil, and then left, with instructions to administer another dose of the same cathartic if she was not decidedly better within an hour. As Aunt Sally had always been an extremely healthy woman, and prided herself on the fact that she had never taken a dose of medicine in her life, the results may be better imagined than described; for it was soon found that she had been severely stunned by her fall, but not seriously injured in any way. Hence her wrath knew no bounds when she learned what the Doctor had given her.

The next evening being Saturday, quite a number of the citizens of Caddo, and vicinity, called at the post-office to discuss the news and get their mail, as was their custom. Dr. Buckwether, Tom Elliot, Fin Mincer, and Josh Slathers, were generally conspicuous in these Saturday evening post-office discussions; and of late an unusual interest was taken in these meetings, as this was the year of the presidential campaign, and the town was pretty evenly divided between the two dominant parties. Buckwether, Elliott and Mincer boasted of being Democrats, while Slathers was an ardent Republican. The Doctor was lecturing a crowd in the post-office on the sin of profanity, when Elliott and Slathers arrived.

The latter made use of the following expression as he and Tom entered the office:

“ I tell you, Tom, he ain’t fittin to be president, an’ ef you ever git sich a durned man elected, he’ll make the devil ashamed uv hisself’ afore his term is half out.”

“ Young man,” ejaculated the pious (?) Doctor, “ did I not hear you taking the name of your Lord in vain?”

“ No, sir, Doc. He may be *your* Lord, an’ I aint

surprised that you stan' up fer him. But what uv it, anyhow?"

"I have been called to preach the gospel, Mr. Slathers, and when I hear such disrespectful language used, I feel called upon to rebuke the guilty party."

"The devil you do! *Who called you* to preach the gospel?"

"I recognize the call as coming from on high, and I must be faithful to my calling."

"Now, look here, you ole hypocritical rooster," said Slathers, "I've got a short sarmon to preach to you. I may not git my tex jist as it is in the book, but I guess you'll ketch on to what I mean. The trouble the tex tells about tuck place over in the ole country. A feller 'at lived in Jerusalem, got skeered an' thought all the Jerusalem banks was a goin' to bust; so he ups an' checks all his money outen 'em, and starts over to Jericho to boom that town by investin' all his money in corner lots. But afore he got half way to Jericho, a lot uv durned cut-throats come outen the bresh an' stood him up an' robbed him uv every nickel he had, an' tuck the heft uv his clothes, an' then arter they'd 'bout killed him, sneaked off with their swag an' left him thar to die. But bimeby a ole hypocritical sky-pilot come along an' found the poor man a layin' thar a bleedin' an' half dead, an' he knowed durned well that poor feller would die if suthin' wusn't done fer him. But he jest looked at him a minnit er so, and then went off an' left him to die alone, sayin': 'I should be glad to lend my sarvices in this case, but he don't belong to my church; an' then the dignity uv my office as sky-pilot ferbids that I should do anything fer him.' Purty soon after Mr. Sky-pilot left him, Mr. Ananias Levite come along, an' he went

an' sniffled at the wounded, naked an' half dead man a minnit or two, an' then said: 'Good enough fer him. He'd no business to go an' check all his money outen the Jerusalem banks, an' take it away to boom Jericho. I should be glad to lend *my* sarvices in this case, but I see he's got nothin' now to pay my bill ef I should. Besides, the dignity uv my perfession will not allow it; so I'll let him die. An' seein' as I've got to lead the Jerusalem prair-meetin' to-night, I must be skippin' along.' But jist arter Mr. Levite left him, a ole farmer, with a heart in him a durned sight bigger 'an both uv these hypocrites' livers, come ridin' along, a whistlin' Yankee-Doodle, but as soon as he got in sight uv the wounded, bleedin' man, he shet up his whistlin' an' went straight to him, an' got down ofen his hoss an' lifted the poor feller up, and gin him a little swig uv brandy, an' said: 'Poor cuss, you're in a devil uv a fix, an' suthin's got to be done fer you, er you'll have to pass in your checks afore mornin'. Here, put on my overcoat, er you'll freeze to death this cold evenin'.' 'Oh, no,' says the revived but still weak an' bleedin' man, 'I'm not fitten to put on your nice beaver coat; I'll git it all bloody.' 'Durn the blood,' said the kind hearted man, 'who keers for that? Put it on, I tell ye, an' let me help you on my hoss, fer you can't walk, an' you'll kick the bucket afore mornin' ef you stay here, sure as shootin'.' So he got him on his hoss an' tuck him to a fust-class hotel an' kep him thar, an' footed all the bills 'till the poor feller got well enough to hustle fer hisself."

"Well, well, Mr. Slathers," said the Doctor, in the pause following the close of the speaker's remarks, "you have given us quite a discourse; but where is your application?"

"Doc. Buckwether," said Slathers, "did any one ever call on you to go an' see a poor woman who was throwed from her hoss, an' tuck up fer dead?"

"Yes, sir."

"An' didn't you refuse to lift a durned finger to help her, unless they'd insult the nicest an' best doctor in town, by astin' her to leave the bedside an' room uv the sufferer afore you'd go, er do a cussid thing fer her?"

"I merely carried out the rules of our school of physicians, sir."

"Durn your rules, Doc. Do they require you to let a poor, crippled woman die, rather 'en to lift a finger to give 'em any help, ef some good angel was a doin' all she could to give relief to the sufferer 'till you could git thar? Besides that, Doc., do you s'pose eny one man er woman knows it all?"

"It is not to be supposed, Mr. Slathers, that *any* woman can master the deep science of medicine. Moreover, it would not be professional for us to countenance *her* as a *physician*, by meeting with her in consultation, as it would lower the dignity of *our* honored profession to do so."

"The *devil* it would! As to masterin' the deep science uv medicine, all I've got to say is, that Dr. Truworthy, er eny other sensible woman, knows a durned sight better 'n to give a cussid big dose uv castor ile to a woman jist 'cause she was throwed from a hoss an' stunned half to death."

"Three cheers for parson Slathers," shouted Jim Bennett, a nephew of Aunt Sally. "He's preached us the most practical sermon from that text we've had in ten years. Hip! hip! hip! hurrah!"

And with the exception of Fin Mincer, Tom Elliott, and a few others who were Buckwether's friends, the cheers were given with a will; for while Slathers was rough and uncouth in his manners and language, yet his heart was nearly always in the right place, and he was so bold in advocating what he thought to be right, that those who disagreed with him respected his candor and honesty, and evil doers had a wholesome fear of offending him.

As the Doctor walked hurriedly out, followed by Mincer and Elliott, he turned back, and in angry tones said:

"Young men, beware! Such sacriligious conduct will surely be visited with a judgment from on high. I warn you to flee from the wrath to come."

"The same to you, Doc.," said Slathers, as the company filed out of the post-office and separated for their homes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE INTERCEPTED LETTER.

NORA went tripping homeward from Mr. Warren's with a lighter heart than she had known for weeks.

"Can it be possible," thought she, "that George really does care for me? Well, I shall at least drop him a note, as Maggie suggests, before I leave Caddo."

It was eleven o'clock that night before the light ceased to shine from Nora's window. She first addressed an envelope to her classmate, writing his name "George W. Hartley, Esq." This looked rather too cold and formal, so she laid it aside and addressed another—"George Hartley, Caddo." This suited her better. She then wrote half a dozen different letters to him, but none of them suited her. Five of them were too expressive of tender sentiment, she thought, for the first letter she had ever written to him, and one was too cold and chilling; so they were all laid aside, and she began the seventh, which she afterward decided to send, and it ran as follows:

"GEORGE HARTLEY, City.

Esteemed Classmate:—As I am going away to a select school for young ladies in Albany, New York, soon, I am going to ask all of my classmates here to write me often, for I shall be lonely, so far away amongst strangers; and although you have not seemed very friendly of late, yet I hope you will kindly drop me a line occasionally, as any word from an old schoolmate

will be a welcome message to me. I should much prefer remaining at home, but pa and ma say I need a higher and more refined training than I can get here in Caddo, so it seems that *I* am given no choice in the matter. They say I shall have to remain away for two years, and possibly longer, so fearing that my old classmates here will all forget me, unless letters should occasionally pass between us, you will pardon me for asking you to divide the burden of the correspondence with other members of our class.

Wishing you the best of success in life, and that you may not forget your old friends when you begin writing M. D. after your name, I am,

Your friend and classmate,

NORA C. BLACKFOOT.

After sealing this in the second envelope she had addressed, she dropped it into the drawer of her dressing case, and turning the key, put the latter in her pocket. While she had been writing, however, the first envelope, with the first letter she had written, dropped down on the skirt of her dress, and when she arose to put away her writing material they slipped off under the table and were unnoticed. She gathered up, as she supposed, all of the discarded writing, and wadding it up into a little ball, threw it into the stove, in which she saw there was still enough fire to consume it. Soon she was sweetly dreaming of the one to whom she had written, while her head was half buried in the downy pillow on which she slept, until late the next morning, when awakened by her mischievous sister, Kate, who had been sent to call her to breakfast. When Kate entered Nora's room, she saw a corner of the written sheet extending from under the table, and taking it up,

read Nora's first letter to George. She folded it up and put it in the envelope, and then awakening Nora, held up the letter before her and said :

"I've read every word of your love letter to George Hartley, and I'm going to keep it, ha, ha, ha, so get it if you can," and then darted down to the dining room before Nora could take the first step to prevent her.

Kate was laughing so heartily when she entered the dining room that her father said :

"What on earth amuses you so, Kate? You come in the room like a whirlwind."

"I thought Nora was going to follow me clear into the dining room in her night clothes," said the laughing child. "She's just hopping mad 'cause I got her letter."

"Her letter, child! What letter?"

"Why one she has been writing to George Hartley; here it is;" and with this she handed the letter to her father, who read it with an angry scowl, saying, as Nora entered the room :

"Girl, I'm ashamed of you! I thought you had *more sense* than to write such a letter as this to *any* young man, and especially one so *far* beneath you in the social and *financial* scale. George Hartley shall never see this, for I shall burn it. And now I tell you, *once for all*, Nora, this thing of your writing letters, or having anything to do with such poor, worthless fellows *must stop right here and now*. I see we are not getting you away to school any too soon."

So saying, he went to the library and threw the letter in the grate, but put the envelope in the drawer of his desk and locked it, with a determination to see that no more letters passed between his daughter and young Hartley.

Nora, however, felt that she was not doing wrong in mailing the letter she had already written; so that afternoon, while her father was called out of town to see a patient, she dropped it in the post office, and had the pleasure of seeing George call at the post office within a half hour afterward, while she and Maggie Warren were walking down the opposite side of the street. The next afternoon her father was called out of town again, and Kate was sent by her mother for the mail, but Nora met her at the gate, and seeing a drop letter for herself, seized it from her sister's hand and ran to her room to read it. But mischievous Kate could not forbear teasing her sister by screaming after her so loudly that their mother distinctly heard the words:

"A letter from George! a letter from George! a *love* letter from your beau," and then went laughing through the hall to the library, where her mother was sitting, saying: "I'll bet Nora's got a letter from George Hartley, 'cause her face was as red as fire when she took it."

"I wonder how long this writing has been going on," said Mrs. Blackfoot; "but I guess there will be a way found to stop it soon. I shall not ask her to let me see the letter, but I shall take measures to see that it is not answered, or if it is, young Hartley will be none the wiser by it. The presumptuous upstart!"

"Mamma," said Kate, "what have you and papa so much against young Hartley, as you call him? I think he's a nice, handsome fellow; and then you know he saved Nora's life once, when all the men just got out of the way and let the horse run."

"Oh, child, you don't know anything about such things yet. You are not old enough. Besides, we have

heard about that runaway 'till we are tired and sick of it and I never wish to hear you mention it again."

"Well, why don't you like him, mamma? What mean thing did he ever do?"

"Oh, I don't know that *he* has ever done anything so mean, but he is Hen Hartley's son, who is always meddling with other people's business, and the whole family are temperance fanatics."

"What is a temperance fanatic, mamma? Tell me all the bad things they do."

"Oh, they say that men who sell whiskey and other such drinks as a beverage to people, even after they have paid their money to the government and town corporation for license, in order that they may be protected in an honorable and legitimate business, are injuring the community in which they live; and this you know is an insult to any honorable business man. Then they are all the time agitating the people on this drink question, which makes it very annoying to those engaged in the saloon business."

"Well, ma, *does* selling whiskey to men and getting them drunk do them any good? I know you said Fin was drinking so much it would ruin or kill him, if he didn't kill some one else and get shut up first. Then there are the Noble boys who get drunk every week now; and pa says they have been in so many scrapes that it has taken nearly all of old Mr. Noble's property to keep them out of the penitentiary. And Mrs. Johnson says they used to have a fine farm, and never drank to amount to anything before our saloon and pool rooms were started here. So does not whiskey injure them, mamma?"

"Oh, child, such people as those Noble's never

amount to anything. Besides, if they didn't get their whiskey at our saloon, they would find plenty of it somewhere else, and their money may as well come to us as to any other liquor dealers."

"Yes, ma, but Rev. Marvin says there ought not to be any saloons tolerated in any town or city; and people who sell whiskey to make people drunk should be put in prison, just the same as if they sold poison without labeling it as such, to people who don't know how dangerous it is."

"Ah, child, no one but a crank or fool would talk that way; and if he preaches such stuff as that he'll never get any more of our money."

"Well, ma, you know that whiskey does ruin, and even kill lots of people, and if *no one* was allowed to sell it to them to drink, wouldn't such people be better off? Wouldn't they work more for their families, and spend their money for nice clothes, and books, and houses, and furniture, that they now spend for whiskey to get drunk on? And could not papa have a *nice* store with books and clothes and all these good things in it, to sell to these people who now spend all their money for whiskey? Wouldn't you rather see Archie managing that kind of a store than the old, dirty saloon, where so many ugly, ragged, swearing men go?"

"Why, Kate, I believe *you* are getting to be a little temperance crank yourself. Where did you ever hear so much temperance talk, child?"

"Miss Bentley tells us lots of good temperance stories in our Sunday-school class. Then our teacher at school says he hopes we will all grow up to be good, sober people, who can intelligently advocate the cause of temperance. He says the drink traffic is far the greatest

enemy to our free institutions that we have to contend with. He says it will yet destroy our government, if the government fails to destroy it; he says it is the strong ally of the anarchist, and the cause of more than two-thirds of all the crime in our country; he says it endangers life and property, and increases pauperism, insanity and taxes, and——”

“Hush, child, you are getting your head filled with too much of this nonsense. I wish our teachers in the public schools at least, would attend to their own business. We can't expect anything else from the preachers and Sunday-school cranks. But you are too large to go to Sunday-school, Kate, and if I were you, I should not go there another time.”

“Why, ma, there are lots of larger girls than I, who go to Sunday-school, and some women older than you go all the time.”

“Well, I never went to any such school after I was ten years old, and I should think you would be ashamed to go now that you are almost large enough to wear long dresses. None but little children and a few old temperance cranks go to Sunday-school.”

This put matters in a different light to Kate, and at times she felt it would be more respectable and stylish to absent herself from church and Sunday-school and stand up for the saloon side of the question, as she did not wish to be called a temperance crank. But notwithstanding the sordid efforts of the avaricious mother to choke the “good seed of the kingdom,” which had been sown in the fertile soil of her child's heart by her pastor and teachers, yet the seed thus sown was destined to bear some fruit, which was clearly apparent two years later.

While this conversation was going on in the library, Nora was reading over and over again, the short letter she had received from George, which ran as follows :

MISS NORA :—Your very welcome invitation to me to consider myself one of your correspondents during your absence from Caddo is duly received, and I feel myself highly honored, that such as you should think me worthy of so much of your attention, which I assure you I shall most highly prize, and I shall take pleasure in answering all your letters promptly. I, too, shall leave Caddo next week, to be gone, I know not how long, but shall be much nearer my home and friends than you, in your far off eastern school. Hoping that I may still be honored with some place in your thoughts and that you will not so far neglect the most unworthy member of your class, as to forget your proposed correspondence with me, I am,

Very respectfully,

Your friend and classmate,

G. W. HARTLEY."

George wrote her another short letter the next day, giving her his Cincinnati address, and asking her to write him there on her arrival in New York. This letter never reached her, but it fell into her father's hands, who kept it for a purpose, as the reader will hereafter learn.

Nora had good reasons for believing it would be best to postpone any further correspondence until both she and George were away from Caddo, as Kate told her, teasingly, that she "would get no more letters from her beau."

"How do you know, Kate?" said Nora.

“Oh, I shan’t tell you, but I know you’ll never get another letter from George.”

“Ah, Kate, you don’t know anything about it.”

“Yes, I do, for papa said you wouldn’t.”

“Well, what else did he say, Kate?”

“Why, he said something about your guns being spiked, and that if neither of you had any more judgment than to be writing such nonsense to each other, he should have old Henry to stop George, and he should stop your making such a fool of yourself.”

The next week George Hartley was in Cincinnati with his uncle, George Wentworth, a wealthy hardware merchant, and the week following, Nora, who had been accompanied by her father, entered the large reception room of Miss North, in Albany, New York.

This Miss North, a maiden lady of uncertain age, was matron and general manager of this select school for girls in that city. After talking over matters in general with her, Nora and her father were conducted around through the building, and a pleasant room was selected into which Nora’s trunks and other effects were placed. She was then introduced to several of the girls who were attending this school, and the further work of showing her, as a new pupil, around through the different departments of the building, was conducted by her new made acquaintances, while Dr. Blackfoot and Miss North repaired to the library for further consultation.

“Miss North,” said the Doctor when the door was closed and they were alone, “I shall leave my daughter under your care on the following conditions. She seems to have taken a fancy to a worthless fellow, George Hartley, who is now in Cincinnati, but may be back in

Caddo at any time. This Hartley has been trying to correspond with her, but I think I have about succeeded in breaking this up. He may, though, now that she is here under your care, attempt it again. If you can prevent any of his letters reaching her, all will yet be well, and I will leave her here; but if not, I shall put her in some other school, as this foolish intimacy between them *must* and *shall be* stopped. So what do you think of it, Miss North?"

"If you so direct, Doctor, I can have all of her mail pass through my hands, and any letter from the young man you speak of, can either be destroyed or returned. There are several other girls here under my care who have been left with me by their parents for similar reasons, and the postmaster is instructed to put all mail for this school in a special pouch, which we have provided, and the carrier always brings it to my room, where I examine every letter before the mail is distributed amongst the girls. So if you can get me a specimen of his writing, it will greatly facilitate matters."

"That I have with me, Miss North, as I intercepted this, which I suppose is his last letter to her. I will leave this with you, as it also gives his Cincinnati address. Then here is an envelope in which Nora was sending a letter to him; but it fortunately fell into my hands, and if it will in any way aid you in breaking up this foolish correspondence, I will also leave it with you."

"I should like to have it also, Doctor, as it may yet be of use to me in some way."

So the letter and envelope were left with Miss North, who was a rather sour old maid, and she took a savage delight in throwing all possible obstructions in the way

of any matrimonial alliances of others. Notwithstanding this, she was so bland and deceitful toward the girls under her care, that but few of them suspected her of any dishonorable conduct in reference to their mail.

An hour after the above conversation, Dr. Blackfoot kissed his daughter good-bye, saying :

“Be a good girl, Nora, and write us often. I am sure you will find Miss North kind and attentive to all your wants, and I trust you will soon learn to so like her and your schoolmates here, that you will never think of homesickness. Good-bye.”

Nora could not restrain her tears, for she was now left, a stranger amongst strangers. Her time was chiefly occupied that afternoon in adjusting things in her room. After arranging her books and writing material on the table, she opened her portfolio and took out George’s letter and read and re-read it. In her loneliness her thoughts ran back to those she dearly loved.

“What are they all doing this afternoon,” thought she. “And George, I wonder if he has thought of me since going to the city? Perhaps I shall have a letter from him soon. But, no, I have not answered his letter yet, and, of course, he will expect an answer first with my new address. Well, I will write to him and Maggie this evening. But, no, I can’t write him, for I have not his street and number, and there may be a dozen George Hartleys in so large a city. I wonder why he did not give me these in his letter. Well, I can write to Maggie, any way, and if he fails to write soon, I shall have her to get his address for me. I can’t live this way, for his letters will be all that can make this great lonely place endurable to me. But perhaps these

feelings are wrong, for God will be with me here just as he was in my own once lonely room at home." So, reverently bowing her head in prayer, she asked the Compassionate One to pity her loneliness and sustain her through all the dark hours of trial that were before her.

It was near the close of the following week when Nora received Maggie's answer to her letter, giving George's street and number in Cincinnati. She now lost no time in answering his first letter, saying:

"I should have answered your welcome letter sooner had I known just how to direct, so it would certainly reach you in so large a city. Oh, George, you cannot know how lonely I am here in this great city amongst strangers. Please write to me often, for your letters will be ever welcome reminders to me of old friends whom I have proved to be tried and true. Of course, they treat me kindly here, but then kind treatment from dear friends, whom we have long loved, seems more sacred and soul inspiring to a girl of my nature."

"There," thought she, "I have almost confessed my love for him; but how could I help it? I do mean it, and something within seems to tell me it is safe to be true. I believe I shall let the letter go as it is; for he has always been so kind, honorable and manly toward me, he surely will not now think unkindly of me here in my loneliness. Then if what Maggie has told me is true, he does care something for me. Oh, how a touch from his hand, or a look from his clear, dark eye, has often sent a thrill of pleasure through me as we have met on the playground at Caddo. Why is it that no other person ever affected me in this way? It must be that Heaven intends us for each other. God grant that

it may yet be so. Well, I will finish the letter and may Heaven speed it on its way to him who is all the world to me, now that I am so far away from him and all others who are so dear to me."

She wrote several pages more, describing the scenery through the mountains and hills of Pennsylvania, and other things that had especially interested her in the journey, and then closed with a request that he direct his letters to her at Albany, in care of Miss North, matron of young ladies' school. Then sealing it carefully, took it down to the matron's room, with a request that it be forwarded by first mail.

"Yes, dear," said Miss North, "it shall go in the first mail." And Nora returned to her room feeling sure of an answer from George within a week.

"Ah, yes, romantic girl," soliloquized Miss North, "so you propose to carry on a correspondence with this worthless adventurer. Well, we shall see how successful you are in getting an answer to this. I shall not break the seal to see what you have written, but will forward it, as I promised, by first mail, but to *your father* instead of this worthless fellow, and if *he* sees that it is a proper letter for you to write to this young man, he can forward it to him from Caddö; so I shall be relieved of all responsibility in the matter and he will see that I am faithfully keeping my promise with him." So saying, she wrote a short note to Dr. Blackfoot, and put it with Nora's letter to George in a larger envelope and mailed to Nora's father.

Weeks passed, but they brought Nora no answer from George. She could not understand this, as she received letters every week from Caddö.

"Can it be possible," thought she, as the fourth week

drew to a close and yet no answer, "that my letter was too expressive of my feelings? He is so truly honorable and manly that he will not, by writing promptly, encourage a hope in me that can never be realized. His ambition, doubtless, is to make for himself an honored name, and he does not intend to become entangled in any love affairs."

She half believed this was the reason she had not received his answer, but not feeling sure that such was the case, she wrote another short letter, reminding him of his promise to answer promptly, as he had promised. But this was forwarded by Miss North to Nora's father instead of to George. In the meantime the latter had written her a long, friendly letter, giving an account of many things of interest that had transpired since he had been in the city, and closed by reminding her of her promise to write him often, which he was anxious she should do, as he had always taken an interest in her and should always be glad to read anything from her pen.

This letter was received and opened by Miss North, as she wished to learn from it whether or not Dr. Black-foot had forwarded Nora's letter to George. But now being satisfied that he had not, she wrote another short note and mailed it with George's letter to Nora's father, saying:

"If he writes again, I shall put his letter in the envelope you left with me that Nora had addressed to George while in Caddo, if this meets with your approval, and he will then think that she does not care to correspond further with him."

The return mail brought a reply from the Doctor, stating that he was much pleased with the manner in

which she was conducting the scheme for breaking up, what he termed, "a most unfortunate love affair," and that he should leave her to manage matters as she saw best.

Three weeks more passed and not a line from George. So Nora resolved to write once more, saying:

"If he does not answer this I shall never write him again. I wish I had not written quite as I did in the first letter I wrote from here. I fear I revealed too much of my heart to him and he has become disgusted with my gushing forwardness. I shall write cold enough this time and shall chide him for neglecting to keep his promise to answer all my letters promptly."

So she wrote him a cold, formal note, covering the above points, and closed by saying:

"If you do not see fit to answer this soon, I shall suppose that my letters are distasteful to you and shall not annoy you further with any of my correspondence."

This, too, was soon read by her father, but never by her lover, who, like herself, had determined to write again, although he had never received an answer from any letter he had ever written her. In this he gently reminded her of her voluntary promise to correspond with him, saying he "feared she was forgetting all her old friends now that she was a Yorker, and in a high-toned school; but that if she had merely written to see how presumptuous he was in supposing that she really meant half she said in her invitation to him to become one of her correspondents, he could assure her that he did not wish to annoy her further, and if she desired all correspondence to cease, she would oblige him by returning this letter unanswered, and he should give her no further trouble."

"How fortunate," said Miss North, "that Nora's father brought me this envelope. I will return this letter to the young adventurer direct, in this envelope, as it is addressed in Nora's own hand, and this will give a quietus to his ardor. But I shall omit his number and street as it will puzzle me a little to imitate her hand in writing even Cincinnati, and I shall risk its reaching him."

Five days after this letter was mailed to Nora it was back in Cincinnati, but was delivered to a distant relative of George, who, unfortunately for the writer, had the same name. His cousin, however, delivered the letter to him on the day following, taunting him with the idea that he had been jilted by the fair and wealthy girl.

There are times when really good men are tempted to use extremely rough language, and this was one of the few times that George Hartley ever yielded to this weakness. But as the reader can readily imagine what his thoughts and words were, we will not record them here, further than to say he was indignant that she had not left off the "Esq.," and taken time to put his street and number on the envelope, as he had given it plainly now in three different letters. But here we must leave George and Nora for the present.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE LYCEUM, OR MINCER AS A LITERARY MAN.

AMONG the numerous attractive features of Caddo, was a very interesting lyceum, which met semi-monthly in the high-school building. Not only the advanced students in school, but many of their parents, and older citizens, took part in these literary exercises, which consisted chiefly of declamations, essays, dialogues and discussions; the latter taking in a wide range of subjects. Thomas Elliott was one of Caddo's leading "curb-stone" politicians, and was always ready to discuss any question. He, with Fin Mincer and Dr. Buckwether, were generally found on the same side of any political question that was up for discussion; while Judge Holland, Mr. Benton, and Mr. Hartley, being Republicans, were generally pitted against them.

The question of placing the ballot in the hands of women, was suggested for discussion by Judge Holland, who had just returned from an extensive tour through Kansas, Wyoming and Washington Territories, where he had had an excellent opportunity of witnessing the influence of women in politics. Tom Elliott, as he was familiarly called by every one in Caddo, objected to discussing this question, saying it was one in which the people were not at all interested, and suggested perpetual motion as a more appropriate subject for debate at the next meeting. Fin Mincer thought that "natuwal gas would be moah appwopwiate than either of the two pwoposed questions."

It was left to a vote of the society to decide which question should be taken up; and as the ladies voted almost unanimously with Judge Holland, his question was accepted as the one for the next discussion.

The Judge then stated the question as he wished it discussed :

“ Resolved, That the ballot in the hands of women is now a political necessity.”

Volunteers were than called for to take the affirmative, when Judge Holland and Henry Hartley arose.

“ Are there no others?” said the president. “ We usually have three on a side. Mr. Benton will you help out the affirmative on this question ? ”

But lawyer Benton was a candidate for Congress, and fearing that the temperance question would be brought into the field of discussion, he declined to take any part, as he feared his remarks might be reported and used against him in the future. Volunteers for the negative were then called for, and Dr. Buckwether, Tom Elliott and Fin Mincer quickly responded. Judge Holland then arose and said :

“ Mr. President, as this is a question in which the ladies are, or *should* be, more deeply interested than we men, I call for a volunteer from among them to aid our side in this discussion.”

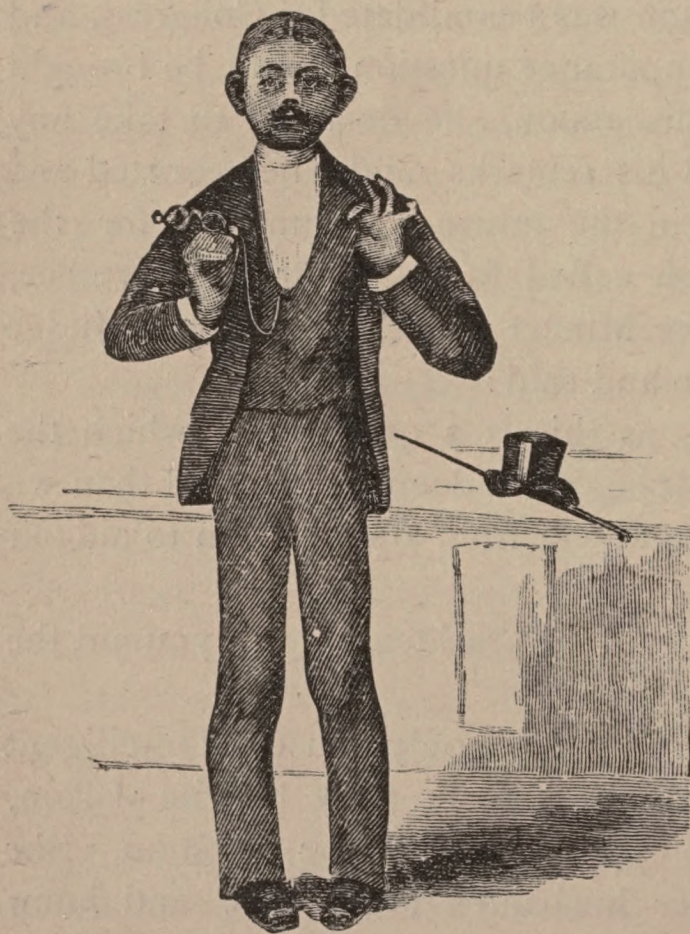
“ Mrs. Elliott,” said the president, “ will you aid the affirmative ? ”

The lady addressed was not only unusually intelligent and modest, but was also unfortunately the wife of Tom, who had taken the opposite side of the question. She had often heard her husband’s arguments, and knew about what his speech would be, so she timidly replied :

“ Mr. President, I am not in the habit of speaking

in public, but if I am permitted to reduce my thoughts to writing and read them at the next meeting, I shall accept the Judge's invitation to stand up in defense of my sex."

Six minute speeches had been the rule, and each debater required to speak without manuscript; but unanimous consent was given Mrs. Elliott to write and read her speech. The miscellaneous business being next in order, which consisted chiefly of questions on scientific subjects, to be asked by some one previously appointed by the president, and to be answered by any one whom the questioner might designate, this exercise was now called for.



Fin Mincer, who boasted of his scholarship as a high-school graduate, being the questioner for this evening, arose in a pompous manner, and after carefully depositing his hat and cane on the president's table, stepped forward on the platform, with one thumb in the arm-hole of his

vest, and his nose glasses daintily held in the other hand, and then assuming an astounding attitude, said:

“ Mistah Pwesident, the first question which I shall ask this evening, may not be considewed vewy scientific, but it will wequiah some knowledge of the meaning of words that are quite common in owah language to answer it. It is this: What is the meaning of Platonic love? I will diwect this question to Mr. Joshua Slathers for an answer. Platonic love, sir; what is it?”

“ I don’t know, sir,” said Slathers. “ I never et any; but I’m death on turnips an’ ’possum.”

“ Then I will give you another question: The equatah, sir; give its length, bweadth and thickness.”

“ Well, sir, I figer it’s a purty good length, an’ ’bout as wide as a curry-comb, an’ as thick as a side uv pork.”

“ Incowect again. I will now ask you my third and last question: What effect does the moon have upon the tide?”

“ That, sir, depends very much upon *what it is* that’s tied. If it was one of Pat Murphy’s hound pups, it would make him howl like the devil.”

The storm of laughter which followed these answers, was not very consoling to Fin, but order was soon restored and the society then adjourned to meet again in two weeks.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A DEBATE ON THE SUFFRAGE QUESTION.

THE lecture room was crowded on the evening the suffrage question was to be discussed, as it was a subject in which not only the ladies, but the more intelligent men, were beginning to take a deep interest. It was decided that this debate should take precedence over all other exercises, even if there should not be time for the full programme that evening. Judge Holland opened the discussion in a short speech, saying:

“ Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: — I have, until recently, been opposed to ladies taking any part in politics. I have feared it would make them unwomanly; that they would neglect their homes and family duties; that they would become querulous and domineering, and would lose all those graceful, charming ways, so much admired in our mothers, wives and sisters. But since taking an extensive tour through Kansas, Wyoming, and Washington Territories, and spending several weeks in each, with a view chiefly to secure argument from the field of its operations against even municipal suffrage for women, I am compelled, against my preconceived ideas on this question, to admit that the results in every instance, in country, villages, towns and cities have been attended with the most gratifying results to all good citizens, *regardless of party*. I talked with representative men and women everywhere, in my travels through Kansas and the Territories, where

its effects have been longer and more fully tried, and I found it so popular that it would be almost as easy and reasonable to disfranchise one-half the men in those localities, and expect satisfactory results to follow, as it would now be to take the ballot from their women.

“Mr. President, it is said that an ounce of experience is worth a ton of theory ; and I must say that, proud as I am of the noble and womanly women of our own State, I shall feel still more proud of them when they can stand side by side with us in the exercise of their God-given rights as our equals and helpers in everything that can aid in purifying our local, State and National politics, by which our country may be made better and our homes and free institutions safer. For these are the elevating and helpful influences which our far western sisters are grandly exerting to-day.

“Governor Hoyt, (with every Governor of Wyoming for the past eighteen years), gives full suffrage for woman his unqualified endorsement. He says : “This is no longer an experiment with us. We have tested its wisdom and it is here to stay. Under it we have better laws, better officers, better institutions, better morals, and a higher social condition in general, than could otherwise exist. Not one of the predicted evils, such as loss of native delicacy and disturbance of home relations, has followed in its train.”

“Governor Warren says : “Our women consider much more carefully than our men, the characters of candidates, and political parties have found themselves obliged to nominate their best men in order to obtain the support of the women. Our women nearly all vote, and we have found this element in our politics purifying and highly beneficial.”

“What higher tribute can be paid to any class of voters than that which has been given by every Governor of Wyoming to the women of that Territory? As yet, they have only tried municipal suffrage for the ladies in Kansas, but the results have been so unexpectedly satisfactory, that it is thought by nearly all parties there, to be only a question of time when all political disabilities on account of sex will be removed. In Washington Territory the sentiment is still stronger in favor of equal suffrage by the masses, than in Kansas; and excepting a few of the baser politicians and those engaged in the liquor traffic, there is practically no opposition to it in that Territory. But through the tracherous plotings of the latter classes, an adverse decision has recently been procured through their supreme court on the suffrage question. Yet this iniquitous decision has only intensified the determination of the better classes generally, to throttle the monster evils that have instigated this move. And when we see the arrogance and insolent intermeddling in our legislative affairs by those interested in the liquor traffic, we may well tremble for the future of our country, unless a more healthful and purifying element can speedily be brought into both our local and national politics.

“When political caucuses are held in saloons and the *liquor* interests instead of the *home* interests are consulted as to the eligibility of candidates for positions of honor and important trusts, it is time for every lover of our country and her grand old flag to call loudly for every element of purity and patriotism that can possibly be brought to our aid in lifting our country and homes to a higher, grander and more permanent foundation than that upon which they now rest. Why is it that liquor

leagues all over our country are unanimously passing resolutions in opposition to the ballot being placed in the hands of women? Why is it that so many of our officers and candidates for office feel that a padlock is placed at the door of their lips so far as the saloon interest is concerned? What mean those lawless and diabolical plottings of socialists and anarchists in all our large cities for the destruction of property, and life itself, but the legitimate outgrowth of our government-protected saloons? These evils, which should never have been allowed a foothold on American soil, have now become a threatening menace to our homes and free institutions, so strong and sweeping that, like the fires on our western prairies, all will be engulfed in one common ruin before them, unless we speedily bring all our moral forces to bear against them. And that the wife and mother should not be permitted to aid in defending her home and family against these monster and devastating evils, is as ridiculously absurd as that she should not be permitted to aid the husband and father in fighting back the prairie fires that would otherwise destroy the beautiful habitation that shelters herself and loved ones. And as well might her hands be tied in the fight against the one destroying enemy as the other, by failing to put into them the weapons with which she can make her efforts the most effective.

“I dare say, Mr. President, there is not a man in this hall nor in our country to-night who would not bitterly protest against any administration that would undertake to rob him of his God-given right to make his wishes known and felt through the ballot box. And as one of the grand objects of Republican government is that the weak may be protected and defended against the arro-

gance of the strong, any argument that could apply in favor of putting the ballot in the hands of men for self-protection, must apply with added force in favor of equipping women with the same protective and defensive weapons. I know it is claimed that we men represent the women and vote for them. But, Mr. President, this cannot be done, and not until we are willing for this right to be exercised for us by others, who cannot know and feel our wants as we do ourselves, can we with any show of consistency, claim so unreasonable a prerogative as that of voting for and attempting to represent the purest and best half of humanity; and nothing but ignorance or prejudice, outside of real selfishness, could actuate such a course. No, Mr. President, it is an insult to their intelligence and womanhood, as it would be to our common sense and manhood, to delegate such rights to any other parties to be exercised for us, and is entirely foreign to our Republican form of government, which provides for taxation and representation to be inseparable. Then let us give our wives, mothers and daughters an equal chance with ourselves in the great battle of life. For

“If a wife can live with her husband
Three hundred and sixty-four days,
And her character still be unsullied
By his crooked political ways,
Surely, voting with him just one minute
On the three hundred and sixty-fifth,
Will not change her womanly nature,
Nor make her less “Heaven’s best gift.”
Schemers know that to hoodwink a woman,
Is one of the difficult things;
While she, with a right to the ballot,
To our country the best aid would bring.

To suppress anarchy and treason,
To stem ignorance, drinking and vice,
We can always rely on the women
To work in the cause with their might.

The fact is, my brothers, we need her,
And it's no use now to deny it,
For the people are earnestly thinking
And fully determined to try it.

Yes, brothers, we need and must have her,
To aid in political fights;
While we but ennoble our manhood
By giving to her equal rights.

Then haste the day of free ballot
For men and for women alike;
As we trust her in all other matters,
We can trust her to vote all right."

Dr. Buckwether then took the floor in opposition to female suffrage.

"Mr. President," said he, "all this twaddle about women being capable of exercising the elective franchise, or of being benefited by its use if we should be so foolish as to grant such unwarranted rights to them, is the sheerest nonsense. I stand here, Mr. President, to assert and *champion* the holy cause of women. I stand here to champion their cause against their having such burdensome responsibilities thrust upon them without their own sex having had an opportunity of giving an expression on the subject. I solemnly believe there never was an hour in the history of our country when it was in so great danger as it is now, since a few of our states and territories have already so wantonly ignored the constitution as to recognize the right of *women* to vote, and in some cases to hold offices of honor and

important trusts, thereby trampling this great charter of our liberties in the dust. For, Mr. President, nowhere in all the wide and ample provisions of our national constitution are the words female suffrage to be found. And if one state or territory may take such an unwarranted step as this, and still be recognized as a part of this great sisterhood, what is to hinder any or all other states from doing the same thing.

“The Judge says nothing but ignorance or prejudice could actuate us in withholding the ballot from women. *Ignorance or prejudice! Nothing of the kind.* Do you know that there are more than half a million office holders in this great government of ours, many of whom would be but ciphers if women were allowed to vote and hold office. Why, Mr. President, look at the vast army of male tramps already out of any employment that is at all congenial to their taste. Can’t you see that this scheme would largely increase the number of this unfortunate class of our fellow citizens? For every woman you put into office some man will have to go out; and there are already a *thousand* male tramps to one female. You can plainly see by this one fact that it is an easy matter for women to find congenial employment, situated as they are, while men are everywhere being crowded out of the desirable situations in life.

“This, sir, is a step fraught with danger to our Republic, and I stand here to lift my voice of warning against it. It is a step which, once taken, can never be retraced; for if we are ever so foolish as to give women the ballot, I defy the world to deprive them of this right of citizenship afterward. Once admit the equality of the sexes, then *farewell peace forever.*

“Our constitution, Mr. President, is broad and ample

for all real needs of the government, and while it guarantees protection to all *men* in the pursuits of life, liberty and happiness, it very wisely says nothing about WOMEN, for the very reason that we men are always expected to represent them and protect them as the weaker vessels. Besides this, there are too many voters already. This is a prerogative that should never have been granted to the masses of *men* even. Only doctors, lawyers, and clergymen should ever have been entrusted with such a dangerous power. The masses of men, and especially *women*, are too ignorant of the laws and needs of government to exercise the elective franchise intelligently. This has been the opinion of the wisest men of Europe for centuries. But more than all this, Mr. President, would be the great degradation that woman herself would suffer with the ballot in her hand; for on this plane she would naturally forfeit all respect from us gentlemen. No, Mr. President, this is all of a piece with too much other sentimentality we have heard on this floor, and the very idea should be scouted by every logical mind, and especially by every believer in the Bible. For as woman led man astray, being first in the transgression, God said that *man should rule over her*. Dare you countermand God's word? Then, as women have not sufficient physical strength to enforce laws, they should not be permitted to help make them. If they vote, they must also fight for their country. But suppose we should foolishly give them the rights of citizenship, they would all vote just as their husbands tell them to, which would merely double the vote, but would not change the general result. But, Mr. President, no decent woman wishes to, or would vote, if she had the opportunity. Why the very act would be de-

grading to any woman. And so we might go on for hours giving you the multifarious objections and dangers with which this wicked and ill-advised scheme is fraught. But as enough has already been said to convince any candid man of the dangers attending such a foolish step, what need I say more? I will mention one further point and close. There are millions of dollars invested in the brewing, distilling and saloon interests in our country, and chiefly by our citizens of foreign birth, which would be fearfully jeopardized with the ballot in the hands of women. These men give material aid to our party, and these enterprises give employment to thousands and tens of thousands of men. Their business is now amply protected by both state and national law. Would you, *aye, dare you*, by granting this dangerous liberty to ignorant and impracticable women endanger the downfall, *aye more*, the *utter ruin* of so vast an industry in our country? Would you thus wantonly and senselessly throw out of employment tens of thousands of our best laboring men, and thereby largely increase our already vast army of tramps, who are now out of any work that is at all congenial to them? I tell you, Mr. President, such a dire calamity should be shunned with a holy horror by every believer in the Bible, as well as by every patriotic and law-abiding citizen. God forbid that we shall ever see the day when the *dangerous, preposterous, and ridiculous idea* of placing *women* on an equality with *men* in this country shall for a *moment* be tolerated."

Henry Hartley being next on the affirmative, arose and said:

"Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen: The time has long since gone by for intelligent men to ridicule

the idea of giving our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters, an equal chance with ourselves in all the pursuits of life. If the declaration of American independence means anything, it means that all men are endowed by their Creator with the inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, and none but fools would claim that this does not include women. The argument of our opponent, if such it can be called, is full of sophistry and danger. It is not only in direct violation of the golden rule, given by our Savior himself, but it is also contrary to the very principles of Republican self-government. A government of the people, and for the people, *cannot* mean a government by and for *half* the people *only*, and that the most vicious and criminal half. Any argument that could possibly be adduced in opposition to placing the ballot in the hands of women, would apply with equal if not added force against placing it in the hands of men. Moreover the very act of the mother country in attempting to enforce taxation upon Americans without granting them equal political power, was followed by a long and bloody war, and this is evidence enough to convince any sane and candid man that taxation without representation is a dangerous, as well unsound doctrine. Again, our wisest and most able statesmen, jurists, poets, divines and philanthropists, have given their unqualified approval of placing the ballot in the hands of women; among which are, Lincoln, Garfield, Seward, Sumner, Wade, Chief Justice Chase, Douglas, Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, Kingsley, Maurice, Garrison, Phillips, Heber, Newton, Dr. J. F. Clark, Huxley, Spencer, Browning, Cable, and hundreds of others might be added to the long list of honored men,

who, after having given this matter deep and earnest thought, have advocated placing the ballot in the hands of woman, not only as an act of courtesy that is justly due her, but as a means of aiding us in elevating and purifying our local and national politics.

“Our opponent says that woman would forfeit all respect from men, with the ballot in her hand. If he had carefully noted the strongest arguments from our wisest statesmen in reconstruction days, in favor of enfranchising the negro, he would long ago have learned that the *very object* of thus arming him with this mightiest weapon of freemen, was that he might be clothed with that power which would *command respect*, even from his former master. Is Dr. Buckwether, or any other human being, less respected because he is clothed with the power to speak, write or vote his sentiments freely and fearlessly? Is it degrading to him to be made a peer to any or all other law-abiding citizens in our country? The very fact that we do not permit aliens, Indians, criminals, and insane or idiotic men to vote, is ample proof that a *stigma*, and *not an honor* is accorded to disfranchised persons. Is it a crime to be a woman? If not, why place the disabilities of a criminal upon her? The Doctor's claim that none except those who can go into the army and fight for our country, should vote, proves too much if it proves anything, as this would disfranchise him and all other men too old to go into the army, and hundreds of thousands of other men who are younger but not physically able to stand the rigors of army life. Again, his argument that this burden should not be thrust upon women until they have had an opportunity for giving an expresion on the subject, is too ridiculous for notice, when every reading man knows they have not

only been petitioning for generations past for this very privilege, but in places have voluntarily gone and listed their property for taxation, and *paid* to have their names registered as voters, simply on the school question. That women would not vote if the privilege was granted them, has been fully disproved wherever the experiment has been tried. That this privilege would be a burden to them, is all nonsense, as no one is compelled to vote who does not wish to do so. That she would *generally* vote with her husband, (if she has one,) is doubtless true, as she generally belongs to the same church that he attends; but that she would *always* do so, has not been proved anywhere that this has been tried.

“As a bachelor’s dwelling is soon cleaned, dusted and renovated generally, after he brings a wife into his home, so would our legislative halls be swept, garnished, and perhaps even fumigated, when women are invited to assist in sailing the great ship of state; for it is a well known fact that many of our legislative bodies, and even Congress itself, frequently present more the appearance of disorderly mobs than that of dignified and honorable men, as many suppose them to be. When we have women legislators, sitting side by side with men in our legislative halls, men will conduct themselves in a decent and orderly manner *there*, as they do at church and all other assemblies where ladies are present. That the women of Wyoming have caused the voting precincts to be moved out of saloons and dirty workshops, and placed in clean, respectable rooms, which their hands have decorated with flowers, show that women have a refining and elevating influence wherever men recognize their worth.

“But why need we present any further argument on

this subject? Not only the right but the necessity of universal suffrage, regardless of sex, must be clearly apparent to every reading and thinking mind. As well may the steam-boat be expected to make good headway against the current, with only one side wheel, or the bird with one wing, to glide straight and gracefully through the air, as for men to expect the highest political good to be achieved unaided by the *best half* of humanity. I speak advisedly when I say the *best half* of humanity, for statistics show that more than two-thirds of all our church members are *women*, while more than four-fifths of all our criminals are *men*. Dr. Buckwether unwittingly admits the same thing, when he says "there are already a *thousand* males, to *one* female tramp. He speaks of its being unwomanly to vote. If it is not unwomanly for the wife or mother to go out *night* after *night*, and search, even into dirty, crowded saloons, amongst drunken, brutish men, for her besotted husband or son, and guide his unsteady steps homeward through the dark night, surely it *cannot* be unwomanly for her to spend a small part of one or two *days* in the year in going with them to a *decent* place to vote.

"No, Mr. President, the idea of denying to our mothers, wives and sisters all the rights we enjoy ourselves, is unmanly, and indefensible on any ground of argument that would not refute *all* self-government; for who can have a greater solicitude for the welfare and protection of her home and children against all enemies that could destroy it and them, than the mother? Or who a greater care for the husband's safety and honor than the wife? No candid, thinking man can for a moment doubt the loyalty of the women of this country to our flag, and all this silly twaddle about the danger to

the constitution is simply nonsense, of which even the opponents of this move themselves will be ashamed ere another decade shall pass."

Tom Elliott being next on the negative, came rushing to the platform, and said:

"Mr. *President* an' feller citizens: While I most fully endorse all that Dr. Buckwether, my worthy colleague, has said, yet I propose to *bore deeper* an' take broader grounds for my objections to this nefarious an' extremely dangerous scheme. I have sot hyur, Mr. President, listenin' to remarks that are kalkilated to lower the respect of our feller citizens fer the sterner sex, 'till my blood has biled. The women give us trouble enough with the rights they already hev, an' ef we bring 'em up on a level with ourselves there'll be no livin' with 'em in peace. You jes give up to a woman once, an' you may always do so. Fer my part I do ez I please; I don't 'low no woman to lord it over me. Talk about bein' nosed 'round by a woman, not much, fer Mr. Tom Elliott, now I tell ye. Our opponents talk 'bout the refinin' influences uv women; fer my part I submit to no refinin' er any other kind uv influences from the weaker sex."

"Mr. President," said Josh Slathers, who was sitting in the back part of the hall, "I want to ask the gentleman a question."

"State the question," said Elliott.

"Don't you think you would a been a nation sight better, smarter an' decenter man ef ye had?"

"As you are not one uv the speakers I shan't pay no attention to yer insolent questions. As I wuz a sayin', Mr. President, an' feller citizens, ef eny man wants to put hissself down or a level with his wife an' children,

an' all govern one 'nother, uv course he has a right to do so; but, sir, he has no right to drag me down, er expect me to degrade myself in eny sich a way. No, feller citizens, I think it is the duty uv every man to maintain the position which the Bible assigns him as the head er guv'ner uv his household."

"Right," shouted Dr. Buckwether. "The Bible is clear on that point."

"It's clear on another pint," said Slathers. "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

"True," said Elliott, "but men ain't women, an' ef the Bible had intended to include women thar, the text would a said so. As I wuz a sayin', feller citizens, women hev got too much liberty already, an' I kin tell ye plainly why I'm opposed to their havin' any more rights than they already hev. In the fust place, they'd be everlastin'ly intermeddlin' in politics, whar they hev no business. They'd be a gittin' clear outen' woman's spear. They'd cause a miserable sight of consternation in our party by their everlastin' agitatin' uv the temperance question. Agin, no woman with eny style about her, er that keers a cent fer her sex, would ever want to be a dabblin' in politics. More'n this, women are too feeble minded to grasp the mighty questions in politics what we men hev to meet an' grapple with. They hain't got sense enough to vote as the interests uv our party demand. An' ef thar should now an' then be one what wuz smart enough to vote, she'd be more'n likely to vote agin our party's best intrust. No, feller citizens, they hed better be a lookin' after the buttons on their husband's and brother's coats. Mr. President, we all on us knows what weak an' silly little

things women fret an' worry about. My wife is always a worryin' about our boys. She thinks our Will an' Ned hain't got no more sense than to go right to the devil by makin' drunken fools uv theirselves. Why, I tell you, feller citizens, I wouldn't give a continental fer a boy what couldn't stand some temptation. They must larn to look out fer theirselves sometime, an' ef they don't begin when they are boys, why they'll hev to larn it later on in life, ef they ever know it. No, feller citizens, sich little things as these don't amount to nothin'. Why, it's a matter uv vastly more importance that the high tariff uv our country should be looked after, than eny uv these little things women fret so much about.

"Now, feller citizens, you all know I'm a candidate fer sheriff, an' ef I'm elected it will not only enable me to pay off all my little bills around, but it will make me independent beside. Uv course, I shall hev to work fer the floatin' vote, an' I shall get the largest part uv it. In fact, I could never be elected without it, as my opponent is a ruther strong an' pop'lar man, an' nothin' kin be said agin him exceptin' he is a ignorant Yankee an' down on all the saloon boys, an' this last you know is an unpardonable sin fer a politician. I don't like to hev to set 'em up to the boys so often as I've hed to lately, but then I must look out fer my bread an' butter."

"Mr. President," said Judge Holland, "I wish to call the gentleman's attention to the fact that he is not talking on the question under discussion."

"The gentleman will confine himself to the suffrage question," said the president.

"Well, Mr. President," said Elliott, "our opponents have said a good deal about temperance an' sich. Uv course, I'm a temperance man, an' I'm down on all

drunkenness an' all that; but, then, I don't believe in gittin' cranky on the subject, fer this would be very injudicious fer a politician. I know our boys take their drinks occasionally, but I don't see no danger uv their goin' too fur. You know boys must sow their wild oats sometime, an' 'a little whiskey now an' then, is relished by the best uv men,' as the poet says, an' it ain't goin' to do 'em no harm, ef they do get a little funny at times. No, ladies, you should think more uv the danger uv a high tariff. Teach the boys to hate tariff an' treason. Women don't think enough about sich things. Only yisterday I heard some women at Johnson's store jist a goin' on because we let a few drunken anarchists vote at the last election. They jist let their angry passions rise 'till they couldn't talk fast enough. They said we knew well enough that not one of those ignorant, drunken foreigners could even read the names of the men they voted for. Well, s'posen they couldn't, their votes counted jist the same fer our party as ef they had all been college graduates; an' ef we hadn't a voted them an' the paupers an' feeble minded fellers from over at the county poor farm, we should a been left, fer the vote wuz nation close as it wuz, an' we hed to bring out the full strength uv the party. Then after the votes wuz all in it took a mighty close an' *peculiar kind uv countin'* to bring our men out ahead. Sich work as this, ladies, you are not qualified fer, an' you never would be able to carry out the schemes so necessary fer the success uv perlitical parties. No, feller citizens, women's place is at home. God intended them fer mothers an' home-keepers. In the language uv the poet I shall close my remarks by sayin' :

“She should be the clingin’ vine,
An’ man the sturdy oak.”

Mrs. Elliott then spoke on the affirmative as follows :

“Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen:—Much as I dislike personal notoriety, or anything that would appear forward or unwomanly, yet I cannot, in honor to the memory of such women as gave to the world a Savior, to our country a Washington, a Lincoln, a Garfield, a Whittier, a Lucretia Mott, a Miss Anthony, a Lucy Stone, a Clara Barton, and hundreds of others, whose pure, sweet lives have made the world better ; I say I should dishonor such women by keeping silent when my sex is so grossly misrepresented as it has been here to-night. We admit that God intended us for mothers and homekeepers. Why else did He implant this great mother love in our hearts, and this love of home in our very natures, that we so much love to adorn for your pleasure and comfort, if He did not intend that we should be companions and helpmeets to you, whom he intended should be fathers and home providers? If companions in life’s work, then why withhold from us the weapons for the defense of our homes and our loved ones, which you so highly prize? Is it ennobling to your manhood to look down on us whom you are pleased to call the weaker vessels, while we are exerting our utmost endeavors to aid you in all that makes our country better and our homes safer and happier, with our hands tied, while you refuse to lift a finger to break our fetters? Why have you driven us to the extreme measures inaugurated by the woman’s crusade, if you really mean to be our gallant defenders against our deadliest enemy? In the language of one of my sisters, who has thought and felt deeply on this subject, I would say, ‘Think what you

may, gentlemen, of the woman's crusade, but let me say, as a woman who stood inside of it, that the womanhood of this nation never laid such a tribute at the feet of its manhood. If you want to find out what a boy is worth, go and ask his mother. By the time she goes into the jaws of death to give him birth, and then puts into him her days of love and nights of care, and he stands before her, strong and clean and tall at twenty-one, she can tell you what he is worth from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. And when the legalized dram shop takes hold of him and tears him down fiber by fiber, and puts oaths on the lips she used to kiss, and crushes out his mother's hopes, it is no wonder she makes outcry.

“If you want to know what a home is worth, go and ask a loving woman, who has kept herself as pure as God's lilies for her marriage day, when, with a great shine in her eyes, she puts herself over into the hands of one man, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, until life's end. And when the dram shop with its fearful curse crosses the threshold of the home they built together, and tears down her strong tower of hope, stone by stone, and degrades the father of her children, it is no wonder woman makes outcry. What was the woman's crusade? It was a long, smothered sob breaking into a cry. It was the midnight prayer coming abroad at noonday.

“You men sometimes say to us, as we stand in places like this, ‘Home is your kingdom.’ We know that better than any one else can, but it is our kingdom that is invaded and outraged. You say to us, standing as we do, ballotless and defenseless before you, ‘You do not need the ballot; we defend you by love and law.’

Do you, when for eighty-five years, by well-defined licensed legislation, motherhood has been uncrowned and her children slain by law, and you have made no effective protest against it? You have prayed about it in your prayer meetings, but when it comes to the sweep of empire in the ballot box and in political organizations, you have made no protest. Oh, men, I do not believe in a civilization that cannot protect its women and babies. And grand as you are, and strong and brave as you are, you will never be able to protect your women and your children and the dram shop at the same time. Oh, in shame, in very shame, either get up and strike down this monster enemy of the home, and of wifehood, and of childhood, or else put the ballot in the hands of your women for their own protection." We do not ask to rule. No, Mr. President, we do not ask for any superior privileges or advantages which you cannot enjoy equally with us. We only ask a place by your side where God placed us as your helpers, and where He would have us to-day, equally equipped with weapons of peaceful defense, that we may the more effectually aid you in all that makes our country better, and our homes and loved ones safer and happier.

"While liquor dealers in their state and national conventions are passing resolutions without a dissenting voice, in opposition to giving us the ballot, on the ground that wherever we have been permitted to express ourselves on the liquor question, it has invariably been in opposition to the dram shop, it would seem that all good citizens, irrespective of party, would see that the shortest and most effective way for the temperance people to accomplish their work and gain a complete and permanent victory, is to *put the ballot in the hands of*

the women of our nation. But, Mr. President, the remainder of my remarks must be made more directly in reply to my husband's arguments.

“Tom, you say we're intermeddling,
Getting out of woman's sphere;
Causing too much consternation
In the party now, you fear.

Say there is no style about us,
And such other ugly flings,
'Cause we're trying to bring about
A good deal better state of things.

Think we're rather feeble minded,
Haven't sense enough to vote.
Say we'd better look close after
Missing buttons from the coats.

Well, the buttons we'll look after,
And another thing or two;
For there's much that's now neglected,
Many things that you won't do.

You don't care a continental
What becomes of Will and Ned,
Just so you can get an office,
And the butter for your bread.

Don't you see the clouds are rising
Far above horizon's level?
Don't you see that rum is taking,
Will and Ned straight to the devil?

Tell us not we're intermeddling,
Clear outside of woman's sphere,
For we're going to keep on talking
'Till we gain the nation's ear.

'Till we close up every dram shop,
'Till we bury the saloon,
'Till our brothers recognize us,
Something better than a loon.

Inconsistency's apparent,
Even to a woman's eyes.
When you vote the drunk anarchist,
Then our angry passions rise.

We hate treason, yes we do, Tom—
Hate it for our country's sake;
But the meanest kind of treason,
Is that which our homes upbreak.

Breaks them up by taking from us,
Those whom we love more than life.
Oh, I tell you, Tom, we mean to
Stay right in this bitter strife.

Stay right in it 'till anarchists,
Drunken thugs and idiots,
Arn't considered smarter'n women,
And much better rights have got.

Stay right in it 'till the ballot
Is accorded women too :
'Till we wield that mighty weapon,
Now so highly prized by you.

Then, dear Tom, we'll still be with you ;
Not to rule with bitter hate ;
But with hand and brain to help you
Lead our land to better fate.

Longed for day, oh, haste thy coming,
When the noble and the good
Of all parties shall defend us,
In our own free womanhood.

Then we'll wave our country's banner ;
Grandest flag beneath the sun :
We with you will lift that ensign
Of earth's highest victory won.

Fin Mincer was now called, for the closing speech on the negative.

“Mistah Pwesident,” said he, “it is with a feeling of twepidation that I see and heah such unsettling and dangewous questions to owah democwatic institutions, agitated, advocated and discussed. Mistah Pwesident, the time-honahed custom of allowing us who pwovide foah owah families, and fight owah countwy’s battles, to exercise owah gwate pwewogative as the votahs, rulahs, and office holdahs of owah countwy, should nevah be invaded by such disturbing questions as this. As my honahed colleague has twuly said, ‘Man is the sturdy oak and woman the clinging vine,’ and any one ought to see the danger of allowing her to assume the pwewogative of the sturdy oak. Mistah Pwesident, the vewy idea is wediculous and puahly pwepwostewous.”

At this point Mr. Slathers gave a prolonged hiss, which raised a general laugh, and so discomfited the speaker that he could not collect his thoughts for further remarks, and after clearing his throat three or four times he retired to his seat under the frowns of his wife.

While the judges retired for conference, before announcing their verdict, Mr. Staats, who had recently quit drinking and taken the pledge, was called on for remarks. As he stepped forward to the platform, he said :

“Meeshter Bresident, I heardt so much dalkings already dees evenings apoudt dere oak und dere vine, I vill shust shpoke von leedle beece of boetry aboutt dodd same :

“ I dond’t vas breaching voman’s righdts,
Or anydings like dot ;
Und I likes to see all beoples
Shust gondented mit dheir lot.

Budt I wants to gondradict dot shap
Dot made dis leedle shoke :
' A voman vas dere glinging vine
Und man dere shturdy oak.'

Berhaps somedimes dot may be drue,
Budt den dimes oudt off nine
I find me oudt dot man himself
Vas peen dere glinging vine.
Und ven his friendts dhey all vas gone,
Und he vas shust tead proke,
Dot's ven dere voman shteps righdt in
Und peen dere shturdy oak.

Ven sickness in dere householdt coomes,
Und veeks und veeks he shtays,
Who vas idt fighdts him midoudt resdt,
Dhose weary nighdts und days ?
Who beace und gomfordt always prings,
Und gools dot feveredt prow ?
More like idt vas dere tender vine
Dot oak he glings to now.

Maype ven oaks dhey glings some more
Und dond't so shturdy peen,
Dere glinging vines, dhey haf some shance
To help run life's masheen.
In healdt und sickness, shoy und pain,
In calm or shtormy vedder,
'Twas bedder dot dhose oaks und vines
Should always gling togedder."

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MIDNIGHT PLOT.

THE Saturday evening following the suffrage discussion, quite a number of those who had attended the lyceum, met at the post-office, among whom were Buckwether, Elliott, Mincer, Slathers, Staats, and others. The Doctor was strongly censuring the judges for having given their verdict in favor of the affirmative. He said:

“Such decisions, even if the judges were incapable of discerning the astute points in my arguments, should never have been given in *public*. They are calculated to give the young and rising generation the impression that women *should*, and of right *ought* to be, brought up and placed on a level with *men*, while the Bible clearly teaches to the contrary. Why, it was by and through woman that man’s fall was accomplished in the garden of Eden; and the stigma and consequences of this fall were then and there placed upon her as a curse by the Almighty, and I have no doubt but that God repented that he ever made her.”

“Now, look here, Doc. Buckwether,” said Slathers, “*you* ought to a been thar to tell the Almighty better’n to go an’ put a woman in the garden to tempt Adam. You kin give God more vallyable information in one uv your long horned, double-back-action, all over creation prayers, than ole king Solermon, with his three hundred wives an’ seven hundred conkybines, ever drempt of.”

“Speaking of Solomon, Mr. Slathers, brings up another argument you should consider; for even that great and wise king fell, through the influence of his wives, thus showing clearly the bad influence that women exert when they are exalted to high positions.”

“Well, Doc., I allers thought that both Solermon an’ ole Brigham Young ruther over crapped theirselves with wimin; but then their wives must a got the wust uv the bargain. Why, jist s’posen you had only ’bout one three hundredth part uv a wife, an’ the rest uv her was divided ’round ’mungst two hundred an’ ninety-nine other men, don’t you s’pose you’d be pesterd a leetle by spells with sour stomick? Fact is, Doc., them wimin wuzent exalted very much, ’cordin’ to my figgerin’, with sich a cussid small fragment uv a husband to pick over; an’ seen’ they hadn’t nuthin’ sensible to take up their time, ’course they’d trump up some kind uv devilment. But say, Doc., ef you was out a huntin’, an’ had your gun loaded heavy for bar, an’ you seed your game a prowlin’ in the distance, an’ a durn little tom-tit a settin’ on a bush close by, would you blow that heavy bar load out after the cussed little tom tit?”

“No, sir, Mr. Slathers, that would give the alarm to the valuable game. I pride myself on being too good a huntsman for that; but what has that to do with the question under discussion?”

“Why, Doc., Adam wuzent nuthin’ but a tom-tit compared with Eve. You take the devil fer a bigger fool than you are. He knowed durned well whar the big game was, when he tackled that job over in Eden. He knowed he could git Adam any time he wanted him, an’ he were’nt goin’ to waste no ammunition on him; fer as soon as he got the woman, here Adam come a

tumblin' right into the trap afore the ole devil had time to even load his gun agin' fer small game."

"Do you mean by this, Mr. Slathers, that man is weaker and more liable to err than woman?"

"That's jist the size of it, Doc., when you come to figgerin' on gittin' 'em into the devil's traps, an' you can't rub it out. Why, more'n a hundred men are up before the courts fer some devilment, to whar you find *one* woman. Then jist look at the steps of creation; fust the earth, then vegetation, arter that fish an' fowls, then animals an' sich like varmint, next Adam; but the last an' crownin' work uv *all* was *woman*, the *finest* an' best piece uv creation that God ever put on this green earth. An' do you s'pose He was a goin' to make a botch of it on her, arter he had got all the lower an' dirtier work done? No, sir, Doc., the devil's no spring chicken, an' he knowed durned well ef he'd a commenced firin' around at sich small fry as Adam, he'd a skeerd the woman clear outen the *garden*, an' then he'd *never* ketch *her*. Then what could the devil a done with Adam anyhow? He wuzen't wuth nothin' to ole nick without the woman, an' he wouldn't a give a cuss fer him ef he couldn't a got her, no more'n you would fer a durn little tom-tit when ther wus bar in sight. No, sir, Doc., that garden of Eden business don't prove nothin' on *your* side uv the question."

"Ah, Slathers, you are too much of an ignoramus to clearly comprehend sound argument," said the Doctor. "Why, as I said in my speech, the *wisest men* in Europe, for centuries past, have seen the danger of recognizing the equality of the weaker sex with men, and even you must admit that my arguments were *strong* and unanswerable on many points in the discussion."

"I don't care a cuss, Doc., whether your wise men live in Europe, *Irup* or *Orup*. I know durned well that the only danger in our givin' women a equal chance in life is, that all sich educated fools as think like you do, would have to trot up a nation sight livelier 'en ever you did er be left to come up with the hindmost. Your argyment did *smell* strong of the saloon, but outside uv that, there was nothin' in it to answer. Any one mout guess from your talk that you are a silent partner in a second-class drug-store."

"That, sir, is none of your business, Mr. Slathers, and if you will attend to your *own* business, and let others alone, you will have more friends and will fare much better."

"I appwove of those wemarks," said Mincer; "they wemind me of the wemarks I fwequently heard my wealthy fathah make befoah he suspended in business. He was a silent pawtneh in sevwal lawge enteapwises, and I think Mistah Slathers is entiwallly too obstwep-owus."

"I ha'int no apology to make fer steppin' on corns, gentlemen, when they are scatterd 'round so thick that a feller can't step nowhar else."

"Well, Josh," said Elliott, "you needn't be so blasted personal er sarcastic in your remarks. Dr. Buckwether is a Christian gentleman, an' he's got a right to hev his money invested in any legitimate way that suits him."

"Who said he didn't?" was the quick retort of Josh.

"Your manner, sir, indicated more than your words would imply," answered Elliott, "and an apology is due from you to the Doctor."

"Yes, sir, and this is not the first time you have insulted me and other Christian gentlemen, and I de-

mand an apology here and now," said Buckwether, stepping with Elliott toward Slathers, in a belligerent manner.

"Vait a leedtle, shentlemens," shouted Staats, "Vait 'till I gidts von shlop puckedt to catch dee ploodt mit, ofer dere ish peen some shpildt mit der fighdtings already."

This latter remark caused so much merriment, that the war cloud soon passed away, and the company at the post office dispersed without further angry words. Strange as it may seem, Dr. Buckwether, with all his religious pretensions, was a silent partner with Dr. Blackfoot, and his son Arch, in the drug and saloon business; and as the leading women as well as some of the men of Caddö had recently taken active measures to check the ravages of the drink traffic, which had invaded some of their homes, and was threatening many others, through this very saloon, the proprietors became alarmed and determined to counteract these measures if possible. Accordingly, they met late every Sunday night in Dr. Blackfoot's private office for consultation. Several indictments had recently been served on Arch for selling intoxicants to minors and habitual drunkards through the efforts of the temperance woman chiefly, and this had become an expensive business to the proprietors, which told largely on their profits. They therefore took a few others into their confidence, and laid plans for retaliation.

Mr. Noble's boys had now all become regular patrons of the Blackfoot saloon; John and Walter, the two younger boys, rarely passing an evening without calling at the saloon, and as they were but little younger than Arch, who was regular bar-tender, a close attach-

ment sprung up between the three young men ; so they, with Alexander Wood, a young man who was reading law with Mr. Quigley, were sometimes invited to their midnight meetings for consultation, as the older men could readily use them as "cats' paws" in some of their schemes.

Six months before the opening of this chapter, a stranger made his first visit to Caddo, and registered at the hotel under the name of John Long. He always seemed to have plenty of money, but where or how he came by it, none in Caddo knew ; yet he soon worked himself into the good graces of the young men and boys who frequented the Blackfoot saloon and billiard rooms. He was frequently gone for weeks at a time, but no one except the Blackfoots, Buckwether, and the Noble boys, seemed to know or care much about him. Although Mr. Long was not always called in consultation at the Sunday night meetings referred to, yet he was frequently seen leaving Dr. Blackfoot's private office with Dr. Buckwether very late at night.

How the author learned what was done at these midnight meetings, the reader must be left to conjecture, until later developments in our story are reached. On the Sunday night following the discussion on the Suffrage question, a meeting of intense interest was held in Dr. Blackfoot's private office, to which the proprietors had invited both Mr. Wood and Mr. Long. In these meetings, Dr. Blackfoot was generally called "Dick," and Dr. Buckwether "Buck."

After the door was locked, and there were but few passers on the street, Dr. Buckwether said:

"Dick, I tell you something must be done, and that soon, too, or these temperance busybodies will ruin our

business here. You know Judge Holland and Hen. Hartley are taking such radical ground on the drink and pool-room question that we can see clearly their talk and work will so revolutionize public sentiment here in Caddo soon, that our business cannot be run with half the profit it has been, unless we can counteract their work in some way. They are both very popular men and have the confidence of the whole community. Then from the way that meddlesome Josh Slathers talked before all the crowd at the post-office last evening, somebody has surely given a hint that I have stock in the business, which will make it very embarrassing to me while I try to hold my position as a member of the Methodist Church."

"D——n the Methodist Church, Buck," said Dr. Blackfoot, "I don't see why you *want* a membership in it anyhow. It never helped *me* to make any money; on the contrary, its members have always tried to nose into and interfere with my business."

"Why, Dick, it's rather a popular thing now to be connected with some church, and the Methodists are stronger here than any others, and then I get a good many cases that would go to that petticoat doctor, if I did not belong to the church. But that's not what we have met to discuss to-night, and we want to get right down to business. You see the women are agitating this question now, since they have had a little encouragement from some of the prominent men, and I tell you candidly, I would rather have a dozen men squinting around after our business than one woman. I tell you too, it makes this temperance work wonderfully popular when such wealthy ladies as Mrs. Warren and Mrs. Holland take hold of it as leaders; while it throws the

shadows still darker over *us*. Now what shall we do to protect ourselves, Dick?"

"D——d if I know, Buck, unless we can throw a bomb into the camp of our enemies. I had hoped until recently to spike Hen. Hartley's gun, but the d——d dog always finds some way to meet what he owes me, so I am thwarted there. I think his presumptuous boy at Cincinnati is sending a part of his wages to him, and if we could start some kind of a yarn on him that would cause him to lose his position there, and also get him into the clutches of the law, old Hen. would make any sacrifice to clear him. What do you say, Long; can you work such a scheme successfully?"

"You bet your bottom dollar I *can* work it successfully, if you furnish me money enough," said the young man addressed; "but you can readily see that such a scheme would take time, and will also be attended with more or less danger."

"How soon could you work it up, Long, if you had, say one hundred dollars to start with?" asked Buckwether.

"I could not undertake the job for so small a sum, and it would probably take six months, or longer, to work such a scheme successfully."

"O, h——l!" said Blackfoot, "that will never do; we must strike a d——d sight quicker than that. What is your idea, Buck?"

"You are right, Dick, about striking soon as possible; and if we could get that hateful Slathers into some scrape, it would be the best card we could play now; for he's sure to side with the women and children in everything. Then you know, Dick, he's been no friend of yours

since that run-away scrape when George Hartley came so near being killed, just before I came here, you know."

"True enough, Buck, but he's too d——d smart to be caught with chaff, and he'll catch us before we know it if we fool with him. You know the temperance people of the county of all parties, are talking him strongly for sheriff, and d——d if I don't believe they'll elect him. So you see, *we* are in a glass house and want no squabble with him."

"You are right, Dick," said young Wood, "and I have another scheme that I think will work better. You know that Judge Holland's son, Morton, and Ed Noble had a little knock down in the pool-room the other day, and the Judge's son got the worst of it; and as Mort left the room he said, so that a dozen of us heard it: "I'll be even with you before the week is out;" and you know it was the next Saturday night that Ed Noble's barn was burnt. Now we all know well enough how it happened, for Ed was drunk as a lord that night when he drove out of town, and he fired the barn himself by emptying his pipe in the manger; but as Mort was seen coming home just before the fire broke out, we can at least make a strong case against him. You see Mort's best girl lives beyond Ed Noble's, and he was coming home from there through Ed's farm just before the fire broke out, and I will swear that I saw him running this way from the burning barn as I started from town to the fire. So you see we have something here to work from, and it will give the old Judge something else to think about for awhile."

"Bully for you, Wood," said Arch, "that's the best card yet; for if we can get the old Judge's boy down, it will take the wind out of his sails, *you bet*. Besides,

Mort never spends a nickel with us, and d——n him, he was trying to get Ed Noble away from our billiard table when he got knocked down.”

“Yes,” said Dr. Blackfoot, “but how can we get the Hartleys mixed in with this in any way? I have special reasons for wishing to down them, too, if there is any way to do it.”

“Why, you see,” said Buckwether, “old Bill Noble is a brother-in-law to Henry Hartley, and his son Ed is likely to have trouble in collecting his insurance on the barn if it is proved that he was drunk and carelessly fired it himself, by emptying his pipe in the manger. So what we want is to get old Hen. to stand in with the Nobles against Mort, and that will make a split between the Judge and him, which, as you say, will be “throwing a bomb into the camp of our enemy.”

“That’s the game,” said Alex Wood.

“Bully,” said Arch, “we’ll give them a little h—l at home to look after ”

“Don’t you think this will be a capital scheme, Dick?” said Buckwether.

“Yes, capital so far as it goes, if you can get it to work. But d——d if I feel so very certain that Hen. Hartley would ever take sides, *even with his own boy*, for insurance money, unless he was sure that his son was in the right.”

“Well, arn’t you willing for the game to be tried, Dick?”

“Oh, yes, Buck, it’s the cheapest thing we can do now; and anything for giving them a little h—l in their own ranks will suit me.”

It will be seen from the foregoing that Edgar Noble’s barn had been burnt, but the following chapter will throw more light on this part of our story.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PLOT EXPLODED.

MORE than a year has passed since Mrs. Nina Noble ceased to be Miss Nina Warren. The Edgar Noble that she hoped to reform by marrying was very kind and affectionate for some weeks after their marriage, and as he touched nothing intoxicating, bright hopes were entertained, even by Nina's parents, that he might, in time, become all that her girlish dreams had pictured him. So in order to encourage him to make the most of himself, Mr. and Mrs. Warren decided to deed a beautiful farm to him that lay just east of Caddo. They also stocked up the place and gave Edgar an excellent start as a young farmer.

About three months after his marriage, Barnum's circus came to Caddo, and Edgar's brothers and old cronies prevailed on him to take a game with them in the Blackfoot pool room just after the street parade. In a short time the drinks were set out, and each, excepting Edgar promptly emptied his glass; and every frequenter of the pool room will understand how his good resolutions were soon swept away, after he had walked right into the temptation. That night Edgar Noble went home drunk, and from that hour his manhood suffered a loss from which it never recovered. Often would he promise Nina that he would never touch the accursed stuff again; but scarcely a week passed in which he did not break

his promise, nor a month that he was not too drunk for any intelligent business.

Before the first year of Nina's married life closed, she saw the fatal mistake of her life had been made; for as she sat alone with her first-born, night after night, watching for the familiar, yet unsteady, foot-falls of him whose coming should have gladdened instead of saddened her anxious and almost broken heart, she many, many times bitterly sobbed out in her lonely anguish, "Oh, how can he be so cruelly forgetful of all he has promised me?"

But as this book is not intended to be a description of the sorrows of a drunkard's wife, we shall leave such sad details to more trenchant pens.

As already intimated, Edgar returned to his home late at night from the Blackfoot saloon, too drunk to be fully conscious of what he was doing, and filling the two mangers with hay where the horses stood, he stepped to the next manger, and being an inveterate smoker, he carelessly emptied his pipe into it just before leaving the barn, and the result was a total loss of building, farming implements, grain, hay, and his fine team of horses, harness, etc. He, however, had nine hundred dollars insurance on the building and contents, but nothing on his horses. He told his wife the next day how he thought the fire occurred, as he had a faint recollection of emptying his pipe in the manger, but told her to say nothing about it, as he feared he could get none of the insurance if it was known that he had carelessly fired it in this way himself. But a week or two after the fire, his uncle, Henry Hartley, was assisting him home when he was so helplessly drunk that he

could not walk alone, and just before entering his yard, he said :

“ Uncle—hic—Henry, Ni—Nina—hic—won’t tell any—hic—body that—hic—I—hic— emptied my—hic—pipe into the—hic—manger and set the—hic—barn on fire. I—hic—told her not to.”

Thus when Mr. Hartley learned that a plot was concocted for implicating young Holland as an incendiary, he exposed the whole scheme, which prevented his nephew from getting the insurance money, thereby calling down the wrath of all of the Noble boys on himself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE THWARTED SUITORS COMPARE NOTES.

GEORGE Hartley had applied himself with such zealous energy in his uncle's hardware house that he had a thorough general knowledge of the business before the close of his first year's work in the city. He had also devoted all spare moments to the acquisition of medical knowledge, so that, through the influence of his uncle's half brother, who was one of the professors in the Cincinnati Medical College, he was permitted to attend lectures and also to enjoy other privileges of which none except regular students in the college could avail themselves. He felt that Nora had discarded him on account of his poverty, and he determined to make the most of his opportunities, and if possible acquire position and wealth, partly to show her and her haughty parents that he was not a nonentity in the world, but chiefly, it must be admitted, with a vague hope that he could one day win and make her the queen of the beautiful home his ardent fancy pictured to him in the roseate future as all his own.

It is not uncommon for lovers to do the most unreasonable and foolish things imaginable, and this was just what both George and Nora did after the misunderstanding arose between them in reference to their correspondence. Both suspected Maggie Warren of having played on their credulity, hence neither of them trusted her with their heart's bitter secret, and the consequence

was nearly two years passed after the lovers left Caddo before they learned why, or how, their correspondence had been thwarted.

The young ladies in Miss North's school were seldom permitted to see any young gentlemen company except their *brothers*, who occasionally called to visit them, and even they were required to do their talking chiefly in her presence, so that a nunnery could scarcely have been more of a prison to her pupils than she had succeeded in making her school.

Stuart Stanley was one of the students in attendance at the medical college with whom George became intimately acquainted and closely attached. He, too, had been thwarted in a love affair by a wealthy rival, and although the girl he loved had not yet married the man her proud parents designed she should, yet she had, in an unguarded moment, accepted the token of plighted faith, and felt herself in honor bound to marry an old man she did not love, while young Stanley held her undivided heart. Stanley's parents lived in Albany, New York, but he, too, had an uncle in Cincinnati, with whom he was living while attending the medical college.

The following conversation between these two young men will explain why George opened more of his heart to Stanley than he ever had before to any human being, except his mother :

“ I tell you, George, I could not stay in Albany a day longer and see that old nabob of a widower driving out every day with my Laura. I know she has spoken words to me that she can never forget, and if she marries that old bald-headed gold bug, it will be with her lips only and not her heart, and that *only to please her*

parents. Oh, George, if ever I am tempted to curse the idolaters of riches, and this aping, snobbish, unreal life, it is when I see a good, pure girl sacrificed to wealth in the way that Laura's parents are determined that she shall be. I tell you, George, it is nothing less than legalized prostitution; and how any minister can knowingly become a party to joining such a couple in wedlock, and then from the pulpit preach against houses of prostitution is more than I can understand. How else can such damnable work under the sanction of the church appear in the sight of heaven but the most arrant hypocrisy?"

"I agree with you most fully in that, Stanley," said George, "but, of course, Laura's parents cannot be Christians or they never could sacrifice their daughter to such a man as you describe Mr. Belden to be."

"No, George, not the kind of Christians your mother and mine are, but they are strict church members and claim to have a great deal of religion. But my opinion is that a religion that fails to shield one's own children from such a living death as they are forcing Laura into with that lecherous old man, and only because he is rich, is far more pleasing to hell than honorable to heaven."

"Well, Stuart, you have one advantage over me at any rate. You know from her own words spoken to you that she really loves you, while I am left in the dark as to what Nora's feelings are toward me. This one letter is the only expression from her that I dared build a hope upon; and although I have written her three others since receiving this, yet she does not deign to answer, and even returned my last unanswered. The only hope I have is that there may be some foul play, instigated by her parents, to prevent her corresponding

with me. But this can hardly be the case, as I know this to be her own handwriting. Just look at these two envelopes and see for yourself that the same hand addressed both."

"The same hand that addressed the first envelope has written your name on this," said Stanley, as he scanned the writing closely; "but the hand that wrote Caddo did not write Cincinnati. This you can clearly see. And my opinion is, sir, that Miss North, the lynx-eyed old matron in that Albany school is at the bottom of this mischief. How do you know that she has not intercepted all your letters? Possibly Nora has the same feelings toward you that you entertain toward her so far as this correspondence is concerned."

"Oh, Stuart," said George, "I would wade through fire and blood to prove my loyalty to her, if I dared believe such to be the case."

"Well, George, when I go back to Albany I'll find out, if possible, anything you desire me to with reference to this matter; though just how it is to be done is more than I can say now, with that lynx-eyed old maid ever on the alert. But don't become too blue, old fellow, your chances are worth a thousand of mine, for nothing but the death of old Belden can ever save my Laura to me now."

But as Stanley did not go to his Albany home for some weeks after this conversation, we must call the reader's attention again to things of interest transpiring in Caddo.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE DUTCHMAN AND THE CAT.

AS previously stated, Jacob Staats had ceased to be a patron of any saloon. When he saw the influence the Blackfoot saloon and pool rooms were having on his own, as well as his neighbors' boys, he took the total abstinence pledge, and used his influence to encourage others to take the same step. His oldest son, John, a lad now past sixteen, but large enough for a young man of twenty, had fallen into the trap set in these rooms for young men, and had become one of Caddo's hardest drinkers.

A short time before the incidents mentioned in this chapter, John Staats became involved in a quarrel with Walter Noble, and Arch ordered him to go out of the saloon. This he refused to do if Walter Noble was allowed to remain, so Arch, with the aid of his father and a young bartender who had been working in the saloon for some weeks past, put him out by force, and ordered him to go home. They had scarcely re-entered the saloon before a rock came crashing through the window.

The next day John Staats was arrested and fined for the act, but as he was so drunk when he threw the rock as scarcely to be accountable for his acts he seemed to remember but little about it. He was, however, convicted of malicious trespass, and his fine placed at ten dollars and costs, which amounted in all to seventeen

dollars. This his father had to pay, which made the old German very indignant, both toward his son and the saloonists. He accordingly went to see Arch and asked him why he sold whiskey to boys under age, saying:

“You know dot ish gondtrary mit der law alreadyty.”

“I have not sold your boy any whiskey,” replied Arch. “If he was drunk he got his whiskey somewhere else.”

“Mein Gott in Himmel, Mon! vat vor you peen so mooch lies tellin’? My Shon he gedts nodt trunk mit some vindt alreadyty. Budt you know he gedts trunk mit your saloon efery veek und efery veek.”

“Well, Jake, he didn’t get his whiskey here, nor he won’t say he did, either,” said Arch.

“Nien, mit course he not vill gonvict himself, und he knows you not vill let him any more viskey haf ven he gonvicts you vonce vor to minors viskey sellin’.”

“Well, Jake, you just prove that your boy got his whiskey here and we will make it all right with you,” said Arch, and Staats went home, puzzling his brain over the peculiarities of American laws.

“How vas dodt?” soliloquized he, as he wended his way homeward. “I not can vorshtay dhose American laws, alreadyty. Vorst dey sell mine boy viskey und make him so tam trunk he dond’t can tell vat he does, und den day bush him mit dere saloon oudt, und den dot viskey make him trow der vinder through dere rock, und den der law make me sevendeen tollar pays. I dink pedder dere law make dere saloon pay me sevendeen tollar vor shpoiling mine poy und making him pe von tam fool alreadyty.”

But Staats’ troubles did not end here. For weeks

past a large cat, with a deep bass voice, had paid him nightly visits, and perching himself on the back fence or woodshed roof, would send forth dulcet yowls that attracted all the cats in the neighborhood, and they would meow and yowl in concert until the unhappy man could stand it no longer, when he would arise and unceremoniously disperse the assemblage by hurling a boot jack or a brickbat at the chief orator. He got frequent glimpses of his tormentor, who always managed to keep himself out of the way of any missiles that might

be hurled at him. But Staats one day caught him quietly napping in front of John Smith's grocery and the recollection of the hours of sleep the animal had caused him to lose, brought a feeling of bitter retaliation into the German's heart, and he determined to



end that cat's life then and there. So picking up a chunk of coal, he hurled it with dire vengeance at the unsuspecting cat, but the missile was not well directed, and instead of demolishing the destroyer of his peaceful

slumbers it struck an empty coal bucket near the cat, giving it such a fright that it jumped crashing through the window of Smith's grocery, breaking a large pane of glass into a thousand pieces. The proprietor came out and angrily demanded five dollars from Mr. Staats to repair the damage. This he refused to pay, saying that it was not his fault that the window was broken; whereupon the injured man brought suit against him to recover the amount of the loss sustained.

As Staats had no witnesses he was allowed to state his own case, which he did by addressing the justice and jury as follows:

“Shentlemens mit der gourd't und der honorable shury: I tolt'd you how dot tam cat peen so much meeschief doing already, und I broofs to you preddy quic'k vonce dot dere man vat owns dot Thomas cat peen der von vat must bay vor dot glass. Efery nigh't vor more as dhree veeks dot cat he gidts my vood't shedt on und gurls up his pack und bows up his tail und sings like dere tuyfel 'till all dere cats vor more as dhree miles aroundt dey gooms to his meetings. Now, Meesther Shuryman, und Shentlemens mit dere gourt, I peen a beaceful man, und I nodd't dishturb dhose cat meetings vor bedder ash dwo veeks. Budt ven dot Thomas cat he gooms pack und sings some more last veek I tolt'd mine frow dot no gristian man vood' geep such a tam cat like dot, vot goes aroundt in dere nigh't geeping his neighbors awake efery nigh't mit his loud't singing already. So I goes oud't mitoud't some glothes on me, und der poot shack dhrows mit dot cat. Budt donder und blitzen, ofer you belief me, dot cat vas dhree schquares away pefore der poot shack missed't idt. Und

den efery nighdt he gooms back some more und sings mit such a loudt voice dot he vood vake der very tuyfel, 'till I gedts so tam madt I dells mine frow dot grocery man's cat he must die vonce if I catch him asleep. So day pehindt yesterday I see him shleeping mit der cellar door on py der gorner grocery, und I trowed von shunk of coal at him und hit him righdt vere I missedt him mit der poot shack, und den der tam fool shumped der vinder righdt through. Now, Meesther Shudge, I dinks you peen von goodt lawyer already, und I toldt you vonce how dot vas. Supposen you vas von tam Tom cat vat goes aroundt efery nighdt und roosts some vood shedts on, und sings und hollers like der tuyfel, 'till all of your vriendts vor dhree or vour miles aroundt gooms to dot meeting, und vakes a nice gristian man und sevendeen of his shildren efery nighdt up vor dhree veeks adt a dime, und den dot man dhrys to preak your fool neck mit a shunk of coal, und dot shunk of coal dond't hidt you some, budt you gedts scharedt mit a coal pucket vat shtood der cellar door on und shumps der vinder through, vood der nice man haf der glass to bay vor? No, sir, dot man vat geeeps dot fool cat bays vor der glass, vor dot ish Amerigan law; dond't idt Meesther Shudge?"

"No, Mr. Staats," said the Justice; "if you threw the missile which caused the trouble, you are liable for the damages which ensued from your act."

"Den vy vor dey make me der saloon glass bay vor? Dey make mine poy trunk und den pudt him der saloon oudt, und der rock preaks der glass ven he vas so tam trunk he dond't know more ash dot cat, und den dey say I shall bay vor dot glass pecause he ish my poy und

he ish under age. Now, Meesther Shudge, aind't dot Shon Schmidt's cat? Und aind't dot cat under age?"

The case was decided against Mr. Staats, and he went home murmuring against the inconsistency of American laws, and deciding in his mind that it would be cheaper for him to allow Mr. Cat to go on with his nightly warbles and frantic revels, than to carry his war of feline extermination any further, that had thus far cost him so dearly.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOSH SLATHERS HAS THE "FEVER'N AGER."

MR. Slathers had been afflicted for some time past with fever and ague, and had been advised by Dr. Hiatt to use beer three or four times daily, saying that it would "cleanse his blood and stimulate his liver." But the invalid was rather skeptical with reference to this kind of treatment for his malady, and decided to investigate matters a little before taking Dr. Hiatt's advice.

The opposition which the saloon men in Caddo had met with from the temperance people rendered it necessary that they should cheapen some of their staple drinks by adulteration, in order that their profits should not be curtailed by the many indictments they were compelled to meet for their violations of the liquor law. Accordingly they sent east for a brewer's recipe for making a cheap, adulterated beer. Some months after it had been in use by the proprietors of the Black-foot saloon, Arch, to whom the recipe had been entrusted, dropped it by accident one day in the post office, while removing his handkerchief from the pocket in which it had also been placed. Slathers saw the recipe fall to the floor, but supposing it was merely a wrapper or some other worthless paper, paid no attention to it until Arch was gone. Carelessly picking it up, however, he saw the nature of its contents, but as

there were some words in it, the meaning of which he did not clearly understand, he decided to thoroughly investigate them before returning the paper to Arch. He therefore called at Dr. Buckwether's office the next day, where he found, beside the Doctor, Tom Elliott, Fin Mincer, Jacob Staats and lawyer Quigley. As the invalid had rather a haggard look from the effects of his chills and fever, the Doctor said :

"What ails you, Mr. Slathers? You look as if you had been sick a month."

"I've got the fever'n ager, Doc., an' don't know what the deuce to take fer it. Dr. Hiatt recommends a queer kind uv medicine fer to break it up, but it's got so cussid meny things in it that I never heard on afore, I'm kinder afraid some uv 'em mout raise sich a devil uv a muss in my stomick arter they all got mixed up with the rest, that I'd hev to kick the bucket afore the ager could be cured."

"Have you a copy of his prescription?" said Dr. Buckwether; "if so, I can tell you whether the ingredients will be injurious or not in your case."

"Well, Doc., I drawed off most uv the names on this bit uv paper, an' I'll jist read 'em an' you kin tell me ef it is a good medicine. Fust, malt, hops, Spanish licorice, coloring, burnt sugar, cocculus indicus——"

"What," interrupted the Doctor, "cocculus indicus? That is a deadly poison, and not fit for the human stomach, however much you may dilute it. Why, don't you know it will kill fish when put in the water where they are?"

"That ain't fish berries, is it, Doc.?" said Slathers.

"Certainly, sir, that is the common name for cocculus indicus."

“Well, then, I’m glad I came to you, Doc., afore I tuck eny uv the dratted prescription, fer I ain’t ready to go to the boneyard yet.”

“And well you may be glad; but read on and let’s hear what other poisons that quack has advised you to take.”

“Well, Doc., I guess I didn’t git ’em all tuck down jist as they come on the paper, but they are all in here somewhere. There is calamus, quassia, gentian, cap-sicum, alum, burnt leather, nux vomica——”

“Great heavens, man! you needn’t read any further, for I want nothing more to convince me that any doctor who would prescribe such a villainous compound for the human stomach as that which you have already named would make, I say I want nothing more to convince me that such a doctor is a fit subject for the state’s prison or the lunatic asylum. Why, the two ingredients alone, cocculus indicus and nux vomica—fish berries and strychnine—two of the most deadly poisons known to the profession, would endanger the life of the strongest man on earth, if he should be such a fool as to take them into his stomach.”

“Well, Doc., it says somethin’ more about a preparation of lead, aromaticus, caraway seeds, grains of paradise, ginger, salt, sour or rotten beans, pounded oyster shells an’ oil uv tobacco.”

“And Doc. Hiatt really recommended such a villainous compound to you for your blood and liver, did he?”

“Yes, sir, but uv course he expected fer these medicines to be all mixed up an’ shook up in a good deal uv water, and then drink ’em down with the water.”

“Well, Doc. Hiatt may be such a fool as to suppose the water would neutralize the poisons in such a com-

pound, but it is a fact well known to physicians and chemists, that neither air nor water can rob such poisons of their deadly effects. And now, Mr. Slathers, I wish to ask you one more question. Would you testify in court, if it should become necessary to establish a case of malpractice against Dr. Hiatt, that he gave you such a prescription, and advised you to take it for your present maladies?"

"Well, I'll tell you, Doc., how it wuz. He advised me to git some beer at the Blackfoot saloon an' drink it three or four times a day, an' this is the recipe fer makin' it."

A short pause ensued, after which the Doctor, in an excited manner, said :

"How do you know, sir? Where did you get it?"

"Why, it says, 'a recipe for makin' a fine, cheap beer,' an' Arch drapped it by accident in the post office yesterday, so, uv course, that must be the kind uv beer they hev fer sale thar."

"What business have you, sir, with another man's private papers?" said Buckwether, as the true state of the case now fully dawned upon his mind. "Hand it to me and I will see that it is placed in the hands of the rightful owner."

"You should not allow yourself to become excited, Doc., so jist keep your shirt on 'till I ast you a few questions. Didn't you advise one uv yer patients last week to try usin' the Blackfoot beer fer his liver? An' didn't you tell Joe Smith to drink it three er four times a day fer his kidney trouble? An' didn't you tell his wife to use it fer her stomick, an' that it wuz good fer nursin' mothers?"

“I know the Blackfoot beer to be a pure article or I should never recommend it to my patients.”

“How did you find that out, Doc.? Did you help make it, er see it made?”

“That, sir, is none of your business, but I will answer your question by telling you that they always buy the best and purest brands, and keep nothing else in stock.”

“The devil they do! Now look here, you ole prevaricatin’ cuss; you know durned well that there ain’t a saloon in the county er state that keeps none but the purest an’ best brands uv lickin’ in stock. What’s the use in yer lyin’ in that way? You’d make ole Ananias ashamed uv hisself, an’ ef the devil don’t git you there ain’t no use in havin’ a devil, fer he wouldn’t git nuthin’ to do ef he don’t take such a durned ole hypocrite as you are.”

“Josh Slathers,” said Tom Elliott, “there ain’t no use in yer bein’ so d——d insultin’ in talkin’ to yer betters. Dr. Buckwether is a Christian gentleman, an’ this ain’t the fust time I’ve hearn you speak very disrespectful to his face; an’ ef I hear eny more uv it I’ll hev you indicted fer provokin’ an assault.”

“Yes, sah, Mistah Slathahs,” added Fin Mincer, “I, too, vewy much disappwove of such hawassing expwessions to my fwiend, the doctah. I think ewewy fwiend of law and awdah should depweciate——”

“Oh—the—devil,” interrupted Slathers, showing intense disgust. “Ef you three fellers ain’t a sweet-scented set to be talkin’ ’bout Christian gentlemen, law abidin’, honorable citizen, an’ sich, then I don’t know whar outside’n the brimstone country to look fer ’em.

So whenever you git ready to start in the indictment business jist let me know, will ye?"

"Shentlemens, ledt me shpoke a leedle vonce," said Staats; "I peen a beaceful man already yet, und I vants no fightings; but I nodd vants dot Plagfoot saloon to sell mine poy some more of dot beer und viskey vot gills fish. I dond't can undershtand vot dhose intightments mean vot you shpoke apoudt already, budt dot peer makes mine poy Shon so tam tighdt like der tuyfel efery time ven he trinks him; und I nodd vants some more intightments like dot vot mine poy gedts ven he trinks dot ox-vomity peer, nodd much. Der Docthor say he peen von tam loonadic asylum or shtate's prison vot makes beoples trink dot fish pizen peer. Und I dink mine house vill pe von loonadic asylum ven den or dwelve more of mine poys some ox-vomity peer efery day trinks mit dot saloon. Py tam idt prokes me up already mit der many vinders I haf to bay vor, und mine whole family vill go mit der tuyfel preddy guick righdt away off of dodt tam foolishness pe nodd soon shtopped."

Staats' remarks put the company in a better humor and they separated without further unkind words.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MORE MIDNIGHT PLOTTING.

“Envy and jealousy are diseases,
Growing from other men’s happiness.”

INDIGNATION, as well as consternation, was felt by the little company that gathered in Dr. Blackfoot’s private office for consultation, late the following Sunday night. Slathers now had their recipe for making their cheap adulterated beer, and if he exposed them, as they felt sure he would, it would work great injury to their business. How to counteract this annoyance and suppress Slathers, was the chief business of the meeting that night.

“We are in a devil of a box,” said Dr. Blackfoot, “and something must be done immediately. It was a d——d careless trick in Arch to carry that recipe around in his pocket, but that can’t be helped. The question now is, how to get it out of Slathers’ hands, and after that, to shut off the d——d scoundrel’s wind, if possible.”

“Well, as I said at one of our former meetings,” said Dr. Buckwether, “I think our best course will be to work up some kind of a scheme on him, that will get him into trouble; and I think I see a way now that will fix him, if we can get it to work. I saw him trying to pass a counterfeit twenty dollar bill at Smith’s grocery yesterday, but Smith refused to take it. He told Slath-

ers it was a bad bill, and advised him not to try to pass it. But the self-willed fellow said he got it at the bank, and that he knew it was a good bill. Mr. Johnson, who handles a great deal of money, stepped in just then, and Smith asked his opinion of it. Johnson examined the bill closely and pronounced it bad, but would not say positively that it was counterfeit; yet he advised Slathers not to try to pass it. But the head-strong fellow contended that it was good, and that he got it at Warren's bank, and did not intend to lose it, and told Smith if he did not want the bill, he did not want his groceries, so he left the store and went up to Wilson's grocery and made his purchases there. I was so sure he would try again to pass the bill that I walked up and dropped in there while Slathers was trading, and bought a cigar for myself, just in time to see him shove that bill on to Wilson. After he was gone, I told Wilson what Smith and Johnson had said about the bill; and after looking at it again, he said it might be a counterfeit, but he hardly thought it was; yet, while the matter was fresh, he would see Slathers and get another bill in its stead. But I have since learned that the stubborn fellow refused to redeem the bill unless Wilson could prove that it was counterfeit. So I think we have a strong case against him."

"Bully for you, Doc.," cried Arch, "that's the best trump yet; and we'll bag our game and spike his gun this time sure."

"Yes," said young lawyer Wood, (who knew that lawyer Quigley was also a silent partner in the saloon and pool-rooms.) "Yes, gentlemen, we can surely make a strong case against the meddlesome scoundrel now; for while he thinks you are handling counterfeit brands of

liquors, if we prove that he is shoving counterfeit money, we can soon have him behind prison bars, where he can do you no more harm, for the law is very strict on this *latter* crime."

"Well, gentlemen, we must all stand together and keep our own counsel," said Dr. Blackfoot, "for we've got no fool to deal with; and if he or his friends get on to our scheme before we have all our ropes set, I fear he will beat us."

"That is true," replied Buckwether, "and I wish Mr. Long was with us to-night, for he surely has a long and level head for such business as this. I wonder why he failed to come to-night. I told him that this would be one of our most important meetings."

"It occurs to me," said Dr. Blackfoot, "that there is something strange in Mr. Long's movements of late. Gentlemen, do you really believe that he lives in Kentucky?"

"Why, certainly," cried Wood and Arch, in one breath; "there can be no doubt of that, as he is receiving letters almost daily from Louisville."

"Well, perhaps he is all right, but I think we had better be cautious about giving him too much of our business."

"Oh, Pa, you are always suspicious of every one," urged Arch; "I'm not afraid to trust John Long with all of our movements, for he's all O. K., isn't he Wood?"

"You bet he is, Arch, and you can gamble on that as much as you please, for he is one of the bohoys," said the young attorney.

"Sometimes these 'bohoys,' as you call them, turn out to be tartars, but perhaps *Long* is all right," suggested the Doctor.

"Oh, yes, Dick, Long is surely with us," added Buckwether, "and we need lose no sleep on that score. So let's go on with our plans. Of course, Quigley must manage the case, but associate counsel may be necessary, and that will take some money."

"There will be the trouble," said Dr. Blackfoot. "We shall have to retain all of the best attorneys here where he is so well known, and there is no use in going into this fight with less than two hundred dollars, and possibly we shall have to double that before we are through."

Wood agreed with this, and said that he and Quigley would do all they could free of charge, and would stand fifty dollars of the expense, as their part of the fund necessary to start the prosecution. It was then decided that the suit should be entered forthwith, so the case could be brought in the next term of court, which convened in two weeks.

On the following Wednesday, Slathers was arrested on the charge of passing counterfeit money. He had learned early Monday morning, however, what was on hand, and had retained lawyer Benton for his defense, and he had no trouble in giving bond for his appearance at court.

Mr. Long knew all that was done in that Sunday night meeting, within a half hour after it closed; but how he found it all out, is not necessary to state here. So he called early on Monday morning at Wilson's grocery, and made a careful examination of the alleged counterfeit bill, taking its number and the name of the president of the National Bank (whose signature was on the bill) from which it was claimed the bill had been issued.

CHAPTER XXXV.

JOSHUA AS A COUNTERFEITER, OR THE LAWYER
OUTWITTED.

WHEN the day of trial came for Joshua Slathers' case, the court room was crowded. Few thought him guilty of willfully passing counterfeit money, but the evidence, so far as stated by his enemies, seemed to be strongly against him. The jury being selected and agreed upon by all parties, lawyer Quigley arose and stated the case, substantially as follows, after reading the indictment:

“ May it please the court, and you gentlemen of the jury, to hear us state some of the main points in our case, before examining our witnesses. We shall prove that the said Joshua Slathers, as mentioned in the indictment, did, on the 24th day of August, 18—, knowingly, willfully, and maliciously pass a counterfeit bill, known as twenty dollars, to the injury, detriment and loss of one Isaac Wilson, of the town and State aforesaid, and against the peace and dignity of our commonwealth and the statutes in such cases made and provided.” But we shall not take the reader's time to go through all the labyrinths of an ordinary court trial. Suffice it to say, the prosecution followed the course usual in such cases, and had no trouble in proving that the defendant did pass the bill referred to, and that too, after he had been warned by different parties that the bill was suspected of being

spurious. But this point the defense did not deny. After the evidence for the State was all in, Mr. Benton called Slathers to the witness stand to testify in his own behalf, and he began in a straightforward manner to tell when and where he got the bill, but he was here interrupted by Quigley with several questions that had no special bearing on the case, all of which he promptly answered without the least hesitation, until he came to the point as to why the bill should appear to be so badly bleached and stained, when the accused apparently became very indignant at so much interruption, and said:

“I’ll tell ye ’bout that when I git to it, an’ I’ll be thar purty soon, ef you’ll jest keep your shirt buttoned a bit, an’ not git in too big a hurry.”

“If the court please,” said Quigley, “I have asked the witness a simple question bearing on the case, and I demand that he shall answer it.”

“Didn’t I tell ye I was a goin’ to answer it?” said Slathers; “you must be a gittin’ excited, er hungry mebby.” And taking a large red apple from his coat pocket, he said: “Here, take an apple, an’ mebby that’ll keep ye still while gentlemen be a talkin’.”

“The witness will proceed with his evidence,” said the Judge, gravely.

“Well, gentlemen, I got that twenty dollar bill at Warren’s bank ’bout the fust of August, an’ I had it rolled up in a piece uv yaller paper, as I was a sayin’ when Quigley bothered me. Well, a few days arter I got it, I started over to Joe Brooks to git a fine Durham calf he’d been a savin’ fer me. You see, Joe’s got an allfired big paster, an’ the creek runs through it. Well, the cattle was all on this side uv the creek, an’ his house is on t’other side. But, thinks I to myself, I’ll jest look

through that bunch uv cattle 'afore I go over to the house, to see 'bout the calf. So I walked round 'mong 'em, a admirin' their good pints, when all of a sudden the ole grandfather of the herd, he seemed to smell a mice, an' 'peared like he kinder guessed at I were arter one uv his children; an' he begun to beller low like, an' pawed the sile up over his back, an' he looked mad an' vicious, so thinks I——"

"If the court please," urged Quigley, "I wish the witness to stop this nonsense and answer my question."

"Jist so," retorted Slathers; "as I was a sayin', that durned ole bull lifted his tail an' ducked his head an' pawed the sile up over his back an' bellered an' looked mader en a hornet. So, thinks I to myself, mebbly its me that's a makin' him feel so oncomfortable, so I lit out acrost the paster towards Mr. Brookses, kinder whistlin' low like as ef I didn't know the durned ole cuss was a follerin' me, and——"

"I demand that this story shall be stopped, and my question answered," again urged Quigley.

But the court, jury and spectators were becoming too much interested in Slathers' story, to second Quigley's efforts very strongly, and when the witness said,

"Mr. Quigley, I've got the floor now, an' I want you to jest keep still 'till I git through. I never seed sich a durned illmannerly cuss, to be a puttin' in that way when other folks is a talkin'."

Such a laugh was caused at the young lawyer's expense, that he permitted Slathers to go on about in his own way for awhile.

"As I was a sayin'," resumed the witness, "I lit out acrost the paster towards Brookses, a walkin' purty

lively, an' the ole bull follerin' an' a stoppin' every rod er two to paw some more sile up over his back, an' a bellerin' mad like, so thinks I to myself, ole cuss I shan't be lonesome without you, an' ef you don't keer no more 'bout my company en what I do fer yourn, you'll go back to your neglected family an' leave me alone. But no, sir; he had undertuck to see me outen that ere paster an' he wan't a goin' to slight the job. So, thinks I to myself, I'll kinder stop whistlin' an' walk up a little brister, an' mebbby the ole cuss'll git lonesome an' go back. But jist then I looked back over my shoulder an' I see him a comin' in a kind of a turkey trot, an' he want a stoppin' to paw no more sile over his back, so I knowed then jist what the ole feller were a speculatin' on. The creek was more'n forty rods away, an' tha'd been a big rain the night afore, an' I couldn't cross it without goin' more'n a quarter uv a mile below to the bridge; but I seed a big ash stump a standin' right on the bank uv the creek, an' thinks I to myself, I'll jist run an' jump on top uv that stump an' stan' thar an' holler to Brooks to come with a hoss an' drive the ole cuss away. So out I lit like a quarter hoss fer that stump, an' the ole bull arter me full tilt, with his head down an' his tail up an' lookin' mader'n the devil, an' I seed he was a gainin' on me every jump he tuck, fer I 'low he'd figgered out that I were a aimin' fer that stump, an'——"

"Mr. Slathers, I asked you a question a quarter of an hour ago," again angrily interrupted Mr. Quigley, "and now I want you to stop this nonsense and answer my question forthwith. If you know this to be a good bill, as you say, how do you account for its present appearance, when you claim it looked all right when you got it from Warren's bank?"

“Now look here, young man,” resumed Slathers, “I didn’t ast you no questions when you was a talkin’, so jist you keep still a minit er two, an’ I’ll tell you all ’bout that bill. As I wuz a sayin’, it wuz a gittin’ to be a lively tussel, which would git to that stump fust, me er the bull, but finally I come in jist ’bout the bull’s length ahead, an’ up I springs fer the top uv the stump. But, gosh, men, that stump wuz holler, an’ I went right down in it up to my waist, an’ the ole bull’s head come whack up agin the stump, like a ole switch engine backin’ up to a freight train. The holler wern’t very big in the stump, so it wuz purty tight squeezin’ fer me to scrouge down in it fur enough to git my head ouden sight uv the bull. Purty soon he commenced bellerin’ in a deep, meller voice, an’ a pawin’ the sile up over his back so high that I could see some uv the dirt a flyin’ from whar I sot a squattin’ in the stump. Thinks I to myself, ole fool, you kin jist amuse yerself out thar a pawin’ an’ a scrapin’ an’ a bellerin’ all you durn please, but I’m goin’ to stay right here in this stump ’till this meetin’s out.

“But by ’n by the ole cuss got still, an’ I thought he’d got tired an’ gone back to the herd, so I riz up slow like to see whar he wuz, but geewhillicks, thar he wuz not five feet from the stump, an’ afore I could eny more’n get down ouden sight, kerbim, he tuck the stump agin’ an’ I felt it give a little that time, fer the roots wuz considerable rotten. Jist then I heard sumthin’ down in the bottom uv the stump a wizzin’ an’ a sizzin’ an’ thinks I to myself, thay’s a rattlesnake in this ere stump, an’ then I wuz skeered fer sartin. So I riz up an’ thought I’d jump out on t’other side uv the stump frum whar the bull wuz. But, gosh, I couldn’t, fer it wuz right on the bank uv the creek an’ the water wuz ten

foot deep. So I drapped back into the stump, and none too quick either, fer he knocked dirt into my eyes that time. The sizzin' now got louder down in the stump about my feet, an' jist then sumthin' tuck me on the leg that felt ez hot ez fire. Thinks I to myself, Josh Slathers, you're done fer this time sure ez shootin', fer ef you stay in this stump you'll be pizened to death by a awful great rattlesnake, an' ef you get outen the stump the bull will sling you to the four winds, an' what the devil to do under the sarcumstances then prevalin' wuz more than I could figger. But I begun cipherin' out which would be the most becomin' uv a good Republican, to stay thar in the stump an' be pizened to death by a awful great snake, er to come out an' hev my inards slung all over creation by that cussid ole bull. Jist then I got some more bites on my legs an' 'bout the gable eend uv my trousers, an' finally one on my finger. I jerked my hand up an' see it wuz nuthin' but a cussid little yaller jacket a stingin' it. Then I looked down an' see the hull bottom uv the stump wuz full uv yaller jackets, an' fer a minit er two I felt happy, fer I knowed it wasn't no durned pizen snake a bitin' me. But the last whack the bull give the stump broke some more uv the roots loose an' stirred up all the little yaller devils in thar, an' got 'em so all-fired mad that they was a dabbin' their stings to me all over. I knowed I couldn't stand it much longer the way things wuz a workin' an' I thought my time hed 'bout come. I tried to think uv some prayer suitable fer the occasion, an' commenced, 'Now I lay me down to sleep.' But, great Cæzar, men, I couldn't pray fer cussin'. Why, jist then one uv them little mad devils tuck me right on the eend uv my nose, an' the whole inside uv that stump wuz jist a gittin' yal-



“I’m goin’ to stay right here in this stump ’till this meetin’s out.”

ler with 'em. Then I thought uv the martyrs, uv Dan'l in the lion's den, uv Job kivered all over with biles, an' uv Joseph tempted by Potipher's wife. But, the holy Moses, Quigley, thay wern't none uv them furriners in no sich a devil uv a fix ez I wuz thar in that lively stump kivered all over with yaller jackets an' the ole bull jist outside a layin' fer me. There wuz plenty uv company thar but I was a gittin' mighty lonesome, you bet, an'——"

"If the court please," again interrupted Quigley, "I demand that this foolishness be stopped and that the witness be required to answer my question. You said you could explain why this bill had so much of the appearance of a counterfeit, and you seem no nearer ready to answer than you were a half hour ago."

"The witness will now answer the question as concisely as possible," said the Judge.

"Sartainly, sartainly. I wuz jist a comin' to that pint. *Live er die*, thinks I to myself, I'm goin' right outen this stump, fer I can't stand the racket here no longer. An' bein' a purty good rider, thinks I to myself, I'll jist up an' put my feet on the sides uv the stump at the top, an' as the bull comes up I'll jump astraddle uv him, fer he can't hook me ez long ez I kin stick on his back. But jist as I wuz perched up thar fer the spring the ole cuss let fly at the stump so hard that he knocked it clear over into the creek, an' jist as the stump give way I lit on the ole fool's back, with my face toward his tail, which I grabbed in my hand to kinder stiddy myself, an' that surprised him so much that he gin a big lunge right over the bank into the creek; an' thar me, an' the bull, yaller jackets an' all, went clar under the water, but as we come up I slipped

off, but hilt on his tail, fer as he wuz the best swimmer, thinks I to myself, ole fool, you got me in here, an' now you kin jist tow me ashore. But the water got shallerer toward the north side uv the creek, so when he got me to where I could wade out, I gin his tail a warm an' vigorous twist, which seemed to gin him more friendly feelin's toward me, fer as soon as he got out uv the creek he hurried on down to the bridge an' went back to the other cattle without 'nuther word about our little difficulty. But Quigley, I kin tell ye I wuz purty wet, an' that twenty dollar bill wuz in my breeches pocket rolled up in a piece uv yaller paper, an' as Mr. Brooks wern't at home I didn't take the calf that day, an' hain't been back fer it yit, nor don't think now that I'd better take it, as I'm kinder disgusted with the breed. So the fust thing I done when I got home wuz to squeeze the water outen that twenty dollar bill, an' then I laid it in the winder to dry, an' a part uv it dried in the sun an' the other part in the shadder uv the sash, an' that's what makes it look so streaked."

"Well, Mr. Slathers," said Quigley, "you have spun out a long yarn to give so little evidence."

"'Tis likely," coolly replied Slathers; "but have you any more questions to ast?"

"No," roared Quigley, "for if it should take you as long to answer the next one, we should not get through with the case to-day."

Just then a well dressed stranger entered the court-room and lawyer Benton stepped forward and greeted him cordially. The two then stepped in a side room together, but within a few minutes were back in the court room again.

“If the court please,” said Benton, “we have one more witness to examine, after which the defendant will make a few statements, when we shall be through with our evidence. The clerk will swear Ira Sanborn, of Albany, New York.”

Mr. Sanborn, after being sworn, took the witness stand.

“Mr. Sanborn,” said Benton, “please state your name and place of residence to the court.”

“My name is Ira Sanborn, and I reside in Albany, New York.”

“Please state to the court what your occupation is.”

“Banking, sir.”

“What position, or rather what relation to the banking business do you sustain?”

“I am president of our bank, sir.”

“Please state to the court the name of the bank of which you are president.”

“The — National Bank of Albany, sir.”

“Is your name as president of said bank signed to all bills issued by your bank?”

“It is, sir.”

“Please look at this bill, sir, and then state to the court what your opinion is with reference to its being genuine or counterfeit.”

“We object, your honor,” said Quigley. “We object to the witness answering this question until we have more evidence that he is the man that he claims to be.”

“While your objection,” said the Judge, “is not very well founded, since his giving an opinion is not positive proof either way, yet the court sustains your objection.”

“Very well,” said Benton. “Is there any one in Caddo, Mr. Sanborn, who knows you, or any one who has seen your handwriting?”

“I know Mr. Warren, president of your bank, by reputation, and have seen his writing frequently and he has seen mine, but have never had the pleasure of meeting him personally.”

“Do you know whose writing this is?” said Benton, as he handed the witness a scrap of paper on which a few lines were written.

“I should say it is William Warren’s, the president of your bank.”

“Very well. Now please write your name, as you generally sign it, on the back of this paper.”

The witness signs his name and hands the paper back to Benton.

“Bailiff,” said Benton, “call Mr. Warren.”

Mr. Warren was brought into court, and after being sworn, took the witness stand and was asked by Benton if he had ever met the stranger before who had just left the witness stand.

“No, sir, not that I now recollect,” said Warren.

“Did you ever see this name and peculiar handwriting?” said Benton, as he handed him the paper on which Mr. Sanborn had written his name.

“Yes, sir, this is Ira Sanborn’s name and signature.”

“Very well. Now please state to the court who Mr. Sanborn is.”

“Ira Sanborn is President of the — National Bank of Albany, New York.”

“Now look at this bank bill and tell the court whose signature is on it, and whether or not the signatures correspond.”

“Ira Sanborn’s signature is on both this bill and slip of paper you gave me.”

“Now turn the paper over and tell the court whose writing is on the other side.”

“It is my own, sir.”

Mr. Sanborn was again called to the stand and testified to the genuineness of the bill, and the court and jury were soon fully convinced that it was not a counterfeit, for both Messrs. Sanborn and Warren offered to give other bills in exchange for it.

Here the attorneys for the prosecution became somewhat confused and disagreed among themselves, and so failed to notice the character of the questions which Benton was asking Slathers who, in the meantime, had been called back to the witness stand.

“State to the court, Mr. Slathers,” said Benton, “whether you have any reason to believe that this whole case has been worked up against you through malice.”

The attorneys for the prosecution were quarrelling too intently among themselves to notice the question, and Slathers blurted out:

“That’s jist the size uv it, Benton. Thay’s a set uv rats in this town a makin’ an’ sellin’ counterfeit drinks fer ginewine pure brands, an’ I got a holt uv one uv their receets an’ exposed their durned fraud, an’ that’s what makes ’em so hot arter me.”

“Will you state to the court who these parties are?”

“Yes, sir. Doc.——”

“*Hold on there,*” roared Quigley. “We object to any such questions or answers; they are irrelevant and have nothing to do with the case.”

"All right, Quigley," said the witness, "ef ye don't want to hear nuthin' about Blackfoot, Buckwether & Co.'s counterfeit drinks I shan't force ye to. But mebbey you've got another question er two to ast; ef ye have jist crack away, an' don't be backerd."

"Take the witness," said Benton, "if you wish to cross-question him."

"We have no further use for him," yelled Quigley, "as we have clearly established our points."

The case was then submitted to the jury with but little argument on either side, and these twelve men rendered a unanimous verdict of acquittal without leaving the jury box.

Some explanation is here due the reader as to why Mr. Slathers was permitted to spin out his evidence to such an undue length. His case had been set for trial on the 15th of September, at 1:30 o'clock P. M. Mr. Long, who had been in consultation with the saloonists, was a detective from Albany, New York, and being personally acquainted with Mr. Sanborn, he wrote that gentleman some of the points in the case.

As Mr. Sanborn had business in St. Louis, he wrote Mr. Long that he should pass through Caddo on his return trip, and if his presence would be of any service in clearing an innocent man, he would arrange to stop off there on the day of the trial. Mr. Long showed the letter to Benton, who immediately wrote Mr. Sanborn, thanking him for his proffered services and asked him to be in Caddo on the 14th, if possible, as he wished to confer with him on some points before going into trial. This, Mr. Sanborn agreed to do, and so notified him by return mail. But he was detained a day longer in St. Louis than he had anticipated, so sent Mr. Ben-

ton a telegram that he could not reach Caddo before the 3 P. M. train on the fifteenth. Benton, though, supposing that the prosecution would occupy the greater part of the time until that hour in opening the case and examining their witnesses, decided to let the case begin at the hour appointed. But when he saw they would be through with their witnesses long before three o'clock, he told his client to string out his bull story, which Slathers had related to him before, and in no case to allow Quigley to browbeat or confuse him, as they must "kill time" in some way until Mr. Sanborn arrived. The Judge, also, seeing there was nothing in the case, and Slathers being an unusually rich witness, decided to allow them an hour of fun.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DR. BUCKWETHER'S QUARTETTE.

A NEW minister, the Rev. Robert Litchfield, had been sent to the Methodist church in Caddo; and as there had been quite a disturbance in the choir just before his arrival, this part of the church machinery was so much out of harmony that it refused to work any longer. Rev. Litchfield, therefore, had to conduct the church services in the old fashioned way, by leading the singing himself, the first Sabbath; but at the close of the services, he requested those of his congregation who felt an interest in having a choir or quartette organized, to remain a few minutes for consultation on the subject. As this was his first sermon in Caddo, there were quite a number present who did not attend church, amongst whom were Tom Elliott, leader of the Caddo brass band; Fin Mincer, drummer; and Jim Burton, second fiddler in the string band, who made great claims as to their musical attainments. These three, with Ella Kirby and Dell Norton, who prided themselves on being good operatic singers and the best dancers in Caddo, together with Dr. Buckwether, remained with Rev. Litchfield to confer on the question of church music. As Dr. Buckwether had managed to be called on for his general purpose prayer after the sermon, which he delivered in his usual sanctimonious manner, the new minister naturally took him to be a "*well meaning*" man. So when Buck-

wether proposed to look after the matter of church music, and see that there was an efficient choir, or quartette, organized that would be a credit to the church, he gave the whole matter over to him to be properly arranged, as he was himself an entire stranger to all parties in his new charge. Dr. Buckwether accordingly appointed Thomas Elliott, James Burton, and Dell Norton, as a committee on church music, with instructions for them to secure an organist and have the general oversight of the music for the first quarter.

Maggie Warren was a splendid organist, and had served in that capacity for years; but as she was a modest Christian girl, and did not enjoy the society of this new committee, she was not called upon by them to take the place of organist. The committee met the following evening at Mr. Norton's for consultation, and the organist was the first thing considered.

"We must have an organist that's got some git up an' snap," said Tom Elliott; "one that will play a good dancing jig, or something livelier'n Old Hundred; fer I tell you *now* we're a goin' to trot 'em out some stylish music, something that will draw the crowd, you know."

"Yes, that's the ticket," replied Jim Burton; "we want an organist that can play like the devil for our string band, dances, or anything else that suits our set."

"Well, Jim," rejoined Elliott, "you're the very chap we want then, fer you can jump from "A Charge to Keep I Have," to "The Devil and the Dutchman," quicker 'en any man I ever saw."

"Oh, that will never do," said Burton. "What'll the church folks think of me up there, helping to run the services? Why, they all know durned well what kind of a cat I am."

"D—n the difference," exclaimed Elliott; "they want some artistic music, an' we've spent too much time an' money a learnin' that very thing to let a chance slip, like this. 'Course we are none of us any great shakes on religion; but that cuts no figger in a choir, you know, and so we might as well have their money as not, seein' they are a goin' to hire some kind of a choir to do the music act fer 'em."

"Do you weally mean, Mistah Elliott," said Mincer, "that they will pay us a weasonable salary foah owah services as a choiah or musical quahtette?"

"Course they will, Fin, do you suppose we would be sich durned fools as to spend our vallyable time in looking up something *appropriate* for *them*, and then after renderin' it in as artistic a manner as we shall, that we should then get nothin' fer it? No, sir, not by a d—d sight."

"Well, weally, I am delighted with the entepwise, foah I need a new suit of clothes, and I am even now entiahly out of cigaw money, so the needs of the church awe vewy oppahtune, and I shall highly appweciate my pawt of the salawy."

So it was decided that Jim Burton should take the position of organist, and a quartette should be organized, with Ella Kirby for soprano singer, Dell Norton, alto, Fin Mincer, tenor, and Tom Elliott, bass. They selected the following beautiful anthem for the opening service, which, if properly rendered, adds dignity and grandeur to church worship:

"Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord,
For in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

But as none of the quartette were very well posted in vocal music, they got things considerably mixed, and

allowed the tenor to first sing the whole piece through as a solo ; after which, they all struck in together at the first, with about as much attention to time, accent, and *articulation*, as is generally given by a flock of geese in a barn lot when a strange dog suddenly makes his appearance amongst them. The consequence was, that not a word of the anthem was understood by any one in the congregation. The minister being nearer the singers than others in the church, understood it about as follows :

“ Ee-n-tah-ah-teen-toy-ah-me-to-twee-sah-van-to-Lawd,
Fah-een-to-seet-shelle-noom-ah-lew-see-boo-gees-te-feed.”

This was so unintelligible to him that he felt it to be his duty to rebuke such Godless singing in his church, which he did in his sermon that day, after announcing his text from I Corinthians, 14th chapter, and parts of the 9th, 15th and 19th verses :

“ Except ye utter by the tongue, words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.”

“ I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the understanding also. I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.”

“ My friends,” said Rev. Litchfield, after reading the above texts, “ there is a grand and irresistible power in Christian song, so far above this abominable imitation of heartless, Godless, operatic singing, that the least child in the church could not be deceived by it, or mistake the one for the other. Such a medley of sounds as we have just heard, may tickle the ear, but they leave the soul untouched. They neither glorify God, convert sin-

ners, nor edify saints. Such Godless, soulless, imitations of praise, may please men who have a form of Godliness but deny the power thereof; but true praise, whether in song or otherwise, comes only from loving hearts wherein the word of Christ dwells richly with all wisdom. It may be possible that God Almighty has understood *some* of the words uttered in our hearing to-day by these singers, but I am so sure that *we* could not, that I feel it a duty incumbent upon me as a minister of the Gospel of Christ, to rebuke such sacrilegious performances in the house of God. This is not, cannot be true worship; and anything so fraught with insincerity, and yet offered as a part of our worship to an Almighty, Omnipotent and Omnipresent God, can be but little short of mockery, and must be very displeasing in the sight of heaven."

As the singers and organist had been whispering, laughing, and conducting themselves in such a disorderly manner generally, through the services, the rebuke administered by the pastor was not considered much out of the way by the better part of his audience, though a few criticised him severely. The minister, however, clearly saw the mistake he had made in leaving the whole business of looking after the church music in the hands of Buckwether, and that, too, without consulting with the official board or any other member of his charge. But to his honor be it said, he frankly acknowledged his error and implored God's aid, with that of his most devout parishioners, to rid the church of all insincerity in every department of its work and worship. The results were, that a new choir was organized, every member of which was in full harmony with the church, and they not only honored God in song, but also edified the church by *singing* the gospel with such *clear articula-*

tion that every word was as distinctly understood by the entire congregation, as was the preached word from the pastor. Moreover, God verified his promise to "honor those who honor him" with their "true spiritual worship," and such a revival of heartfelt religion soon followed as Caddo never had known before.

All through the week following the new quartette singing in Litchfield's church, the subject of church choirs and quartettes was discussed by Buckwether, Elliott, Mincer, Burton, and any others who would listen to their severe censure of Rev. Litchfield. Quite a company were gathered at the post-office on the following Saturday evening, and Dr. Buckwether was venting his (saintly?) wrath on the new minister.

"I tell you, candidly, gentlemen," said he, "I have never before been so sadly disappointed in any man as I have in Litchfield. Why, when he preached his first sermon here, I thought he was going to be a second Peter Cartwright; but he has shown himself to be anything else but a Christian gentleman."

"What's the matter with Litchfield, Doc.?" said Slathers, "you needn't feel slighted jist 'cause he didn't call on ye agin fer your long horned, double compounded back-action, all over creation prayer; fer they say Mrs. Warren told him as how you'd got that same ole chestnut off here 'bout a thousand times already, till everybody is sick an' tired uv it."

"He has shown his utter lack of appreciation of good artistic church music, sir," said Buckwether, "or he never would have criticised our efficient quartette as he did last Sunday. We have never had anything to equal that singing before."

“An’ it’s to be hoped you never will agin, fer the devil hisself couldn’t understand a word of it.”

“Oh, well, Josh,” said Elliott, “that is not the *design* in real *artistic* singin’. The *object* is to keep *time*, and to harmonize our voices with the *instrument*; it is not expected that a ignorant congregation will be able to understand these difficult pints in artistic music, much less any of the *words* that are sung.”

“That’s the reason you sing in Choctaw, then, I s’pose?”

“Oh, Mistah Slathahs,” cried Mincer, “this shows youah utah ignowance of the fust pwinciples of weal awtistic singing. How could *you* weally be expected to undahstand such singing as owahs?”

“Oh, you monkey-headed, bow-legged, blatherskite, you air as ignorant yourself as a bag uv putty, an’ can’t keep no better time in music ’en our ole cow, when the dog is a runnin’ arter her. No wonder ’at nobody kin understand you, fer you never larnt all your letters yit, at least you never sound the letter ‘r’ ef you kin help it.”

“Mr. Slathers,” said Buckwether, “I was with the quartette two evenings when they were practicing on their first anthem, and I am sure it was not difficult for me to tell what piece they were singing, and I think if you had been possessed of a musically trained ear, you, too, could have understood fully as much as I did.”

“Don’t doubt it at all, Doc., an’ I’ll bet you five dollars I kin translate more uv that durned gibberish what they sung, into good plain English en you kin now, if you dare.”

“Why, man, are you so ignorant as to suppose they sung in a foreign language or tongue?”

“ Oh, no, Doc., it was all home-made Chocktaw, an’ when translated into simple English, meant that Pat Murphy had bought another large addition to his stock uv dogs, an’ wus a gittin’ short uv feed.”

Thus ended another Saturday evening’s war of words, in which Buckwether’s love for Joshua Slathers was not materially increased.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE CLOUDS BREAKING AWAY.

GEORGE Hartley had applied himself so earnestly and had made such rapid progress in his studies that he had surpassed many of the students in the medical college, who had plenty of money and all of their time for the acquirement of their medical education. But in the accomplishment of this he had not neglected any part of his duties as an employe in his uncle's large hardware house; and so valuable had his services become in the business, that his uncle offered to take him in as a junior partner, on condition that he would give up the study of medicine and give his whole energies to the hardware business. This he declined doing; saying that he had made choice of the medical profession as a life's business and preferred not to give it up.

"Then," said his uncle, "I advise you to enter the medical college regularly, and complete your course without the delay which your services with me would necessitate."

"I would gladly do so, uncle," said George, "if I were able; but while my father is struggling so hard to keep our home and farm I must be doing something to help him, and if my services are satisfactory to you I wish to hold my present position, since by so doing I can help my kind parents who have done so much for me."

“George, you are pure gold,” replied his uncle, as he laid his hand kindly on the young man’s shoulder. “I shall miss your careful work much in the store, but I cannot be instrumental in holding you back from the life work of your choice, for which I see you are laboring so earnestly to fit yourself. Since you told me of your father’s condition, I have determined to stand by him and you, his noble son, until you can complete your college course, and when you are able, as under the blessing of God you will be, you may repay me for what I do for you now.”

“You are very kind, uncle, but I dare not assume an obligation that I may never be able to meet. I prefer going on as I have been doing, if you are satisfied.”

The firm, yet kind old business man looked George in the eyes for a moment, while tears filled his own, as he saw clearly that every word that his nephew had uttered came from his heart. Then remembering his only son, whom he had followed to his last earthly resting place in Spring-Grove Cemetery but little more than a year before, a new feeling crept into his soul, and from that hour George Hartley was taken into the sacred recess of the old man’s heart, that none but his cherished son, Henry, had ever before occupied. And out of the fullness of his bereaved affections, he said :

“George, from this moment you are my boy, and you must do as I wish you to. I can hire others to do the work in the store that you have been doing. I have watched you closely for more than a year, and can, and do trust you fully. Not only this, but I see and know by your manly, Christian character, and earnest application to business, that you already have the surest and best capital for making a success in any honorable occu-

pation which you may choose for your life work. More than this, I think you care something for my happiness. Am I right in this, George?"

"Most assuredly you are, uncle; how could I feel otherwise when you have always treated me so kindly? There is no personal sacrifice I would not cheerfully make to please you, and if you insist upon it, I shall give up my cherished wish to go into the medical field, and will settle down to the hardware business."

"I do not insist upon your giving up the pursuit of your choice, George, since it is an honorable one, for you will succeed better in that than in one which is distasteful to you. My father was a blacksmith, and wished me to follow the same business, which I did for a short time to please him. But, having a strong desire for mercantile pursuits, I chose the hardware trade and have been much more successful than I should have been in a business that I did not like. I have also observed that others who have made a failure in the business for which they were not well adapted or qualified, have made a grand success when they have found their true life work. These, with many other things, have taught me that every man must be the architect of his own fortune. But, George, this is a day of sharp competition, and those who enter upon any pursuit, unprepared or unqualified for meeting the opposition of those who are thoroughly equipped for their work, must necessarily labor, like the mechanic with few and poor tools, at a great disadvantage. So you must now devote your whole time to your regular medical course, and thoroughly qualify yourself for your chosen life profession, in order that you may successfully compete with the best educated physicians. I shall pay all of your

necessary bills and expenses, and you can pay me when you are successfully established in your profession. But before that time I shall expect nothing in remuneration for what I do for you."

"This is very kind, and wholly unexpected from you, uncle, but I think I should talk with my father and mother before accepting such a proposition from any one; and if you can spare me, I will run up Saturday evening and spend Sunday with them, and if they are willing for me to assume such an obligation, I shall be inexpressibly glad to accept your generous offer."

"Very well, George; it is always best for a young man to consult his parents before taking any important step, and I will write a short letter to them, which I wish you to take with you."

So the next Saturday evening found George at home with his parents, and when the letter was opened, a check for five hundred dollars was found in it, payable to Henry Hartley's order, with a request that it should be used in any way that their present necessities might require. He further wrote :

"It is my desire that you encourage George to quit the hardware store and enter regularly on his medical course at once. I have proved him to be honest, faithful and energetic. More than this, I have found him true to his convictions of duty. Instead of spending his Sabbaths in loafing on the street corners, as so many young men do, he attends regularly the church services and Sabbath-school; and our superintendent tells me that he is one of his most earnest and efficient teachers. Then he is so uniformly kind, and considerate of my wishes and interests, and so thoughtful of you, his parents, that he has won a place in my heart that I once

thought none but my own lost Henry could ever hold. Therefore, his and your burden shall also be mine in the future, and I feel sure you will not object to his entering regularly on his medical course, when I assure you that neither he nor you shall ever suffer loss by it, as other checks shall follow the one I send you to-day, whenever they are needed. Trusting I shall receive your favorable reply, I am,

Your affectionate brother,

GEORGE WENTWORTH."

"It may not be our way, Henry, and yet the Lord is providing in his own way," said Mrs. Hartley; "and our home and farm seem more secure to us now than they have at any time in the past five years."

"True, wife," said Mr. Hartley, "but it seems humiliating to me to be under such heavy obligations to your brother."

"Well, Henry, as this offer has been made without any of our asking or seeking, it must be that God's hand is in it. Possibly we may be able to pay off our debt sooner with George as a physician to help us than in any other way."

"I fear, Alice, that it will be a long time before he can work into a practice amongst so many older physicians that will be at all remunerative. But if you think best to accept your brother's proffered aid I shall not oppose it, but shall send him my note for the five hundred dollar check with the same interest I am paying to Dr. Blackfoot. Then, with the stock and grain we now have on hand ready for market, we can pay another five hundred dollars in addition to the semi-annual payment of the interest on the remainder, so we can decrease our indebtedness to the Doctor one thousand

dollars, by owing one-half of it to your brother. But how we are to raise the other four thousand with interest in one more year is more than I can see, and it seems to me we had better pay the interest only, and lay the remainder by for our use when we have to give up our dear old home and farm."

"No, Henry, I think we had better pay the one thousand dollars on the debt, and trust God for the future. He will not permit us to suffer, if we do all we can for ourselves. I cannot tell you why I feel so secure as I have for weeks past, unless it is just my womanly instinct, which tells me that our home is still to be ours. And now since my brother has written such a kind and assuring letter, this feeling is still more increased, so let us accept this as another one of God's blessings to us."

Thus it was settled that Mr. Wentworth's offer should be accepted, and George went back to the city with a lighter and happier heart than he had known since the day he received Nora's letter asking him to correspond with her during her absence from Caddo.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE GAS EXPERTS AND A WOMAN'S INSTINCT.

NEARLY five years had passed since Henry Hartley had been compelled to mortgage his beautiful home and farm for money to meet the debts of other parties, for whom he had, through the kindness of his heart endorsed, and it was by the most rigid self denial and close economy by every member of his family that he had been able to meet his taxes and family expenses in addition to the oft-recurring semi-annual payments of interest on his mortgage note. He was becoming very much disheartened, and said to his wife as they sat alone in their room one night a short time before George's recent visit to them from the city :

“Alice, what shall we do? We have not yet been able to pay a dollar of the principal on our mortgage debt, and we are nearing the end of the fifth year. True, we could now make a small payment on the principal, but as we only have one more year to pay out the remainder, it seems to me it is almost throwing the money away to apply it on this note. Would it not be better for us to give up the struggle and let Dr. Black-foot take the farm now, and keep what we have to start anew somewhere else?”

“I have thought of this many times, Henry, and of late have made this a subject of special prayer ; for I desire that we may be led rightly in the matter, and that we shall take no hasty step that might give us cause for

regret in the future. I have been reading a tract to-day on 'Christian giving, or, paying what we owe,' by a layman, and if the author of this tract is correct in his views, we have been robbing God, and cannot expect His blessing to rest on our efforts to extricate ourselves from this bondage of debt we are laboring under."

"Why, Alice, I do not understand what you mean by robbing God; we surely have not done that."

"Yes, Henry, we have, and I wish you to read this tract before you sleep to-night. Let me read to you one of the passages the author refers to, from the third chapter of Malachi: 'Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in my house; and prove me now, herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it.' Now Henry, you know we have never tithed our income. We have never had any systematic method of giving for religious and charitable purposes. True, we do sometimes give a very little in support of our church and Sunday-school, but we have not given the tenth as God requires."

"No, Alice, nor can we do it now. Why, you see how hard it has been for us to meet our own real needs and obligations, by using all of our income, and where should we have been if we had given the tenth of it away? No, Alice, we surely cannot begin this system of giving while we are so badly in debt."

"God honors those who honor Him, Henry. He

can bless the little or blast the much. I find this command, with a promised blessing, in the third of Proverbs: 'Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase. So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.'

"Notwithstanding all you have read and quoted from the Sacred Word, Alice, I fear it would not be safe for us to begin tithing our income and giving a tenth of it to religious and charitable purposes while we are so badly in debt. If we were out of debt I should be willing to risk it at least."

"Our Heavenly Father never gives His children a command that would be unsafe for us to follow, Henry; and as His command is to bring in all the tithes, and prove him herewith, how can we dare to disobey him in this more than any other command, especially when he crowns obedience with such a rich and positive promise?"

"I know, Alice, but this seems too great a stretch of faith to begin such a system of giving now. Why, we should have no foundation to stand upon, and would do like Peter, sink, when he undertook to obey the command of Christ to walk to him on the water. You surely would not advise so unreasonable a thing as that, Alice, even if Christ did command Peter to undertake it."

"The Savior's language was more in the form of permission in that instance, Henry, than that of command, and could be in no way obligatory upon us or any one else. But even Peter's deliverance proves that, however unreasonable God's requirements may seem to us, obedience will always be safe. Let me read to you the

statement of a gentleman in Pennsylvania, which I find on page 12 of this tract on Christian Giving:* 'I was in doubt for a long time that I ought to give much to benevolence while I was in debt. I began to doubt, however, after a hard and unsuccessful struggle to get out of debt, that I should ever succeed. At length I was persuaded that I was robbing God to pay my creditors. My wife and I consulted over the matter and determined to give a tenth, which we have done, and God is prospering us beyond any previous experience.' But, Henry, this tract is all so good and practical, I wish you would carefully read it through while I look over some clothing that needs mending, and then tell me what you think of it."

Mr. Hartley, after carefully reading the tract, sat in deep thought for quite a while, and then said:

"Well, Alice, I am ready to begin this system of proportionate giving, for I am now fully convinced that it is God's command, and the only safe course for us to pursue."

After arising from their evening devotion that night Mr. Hartley fondly kissed his wife, and said:

"I thank you, dear, for having urged this point of systematic giving, until you led me to investigate the matter; for I feel that we have now taken God as a partner in our efforts to save our home, and with the Omnipotent One as a member of the firm, we shall never fail."

The Monday following two strange men were seen meandering along a ravine on the back part of Mr. Hart-

* This is a tract that every business man and woman should read, and it will be mailed to any address *free*, by addressing "Layman, 310 Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill."

ley's farm. Their conduct was so peculiar that it attracted the attention of Mr. Slathers, who was working in a field near by. They would go quite a distance up the ravine from where he first saw them and then return and stop quite a while near a spring, where something seemed to attract their attention. Then they went down the ravine and were gone for an hour or two, when they came slowly meandering back to the spring again, where they seemed to be picking up pieces of rock and in some way examining the water. At last they went over into the field where Mr. Slathers was at work, and one of the men, who introduced himself as Aaron Foster, of Pittsburg, asked the former whose farm the spring was on.

"Mr. Hartley's, sir, Mr. Henry Hartley's," answered Slathers; "an' no finer man ever drawed breath under a jacket 'en what he is."

"Well, Mr. Slathers, do you know whether Mr. Hartley wishes to sell his farm or not?" asked Foster.

"No, sir, I don't, but I kalkerlate he would ast a good round figger fer it, ef he would sell it fer eny price. You see it's a rattlin' nice farm, an' the best one in ten miles uv Caddo, so I 'low it'll never be bought fer a song."

"So you think he would not sell the farm, or at least a part of it for a fair price?"

"No, sir, I've no idee he would. But what were you fellers a squintin' around that 'ere spring so much fer?"

"We were passing through the country, looking at different localities, and this struck us as being a good stock farm, as that spring would furnish water for quite a herd of cattle. Is that large farm house over the brow of the hill Mr. Hartley's residence?"

“Yes, sir.”

“Is the gentleman at home to-day?”

“No, sir, he was called away on business fer Mr. Warren this mornin’ an’ will not be at home afore late to-night.”

Slathers’ keen wit taught him that the parties had discovered something in the locality of the spring, which made it an object for them to get possession of the farm, and he determined that Hartley should have the benefit of his predictions. So a half hour after dark he drove out on the road he knew Hartley would have to travel, in coming home, and met him two miles out of town.

“What is it, Joshua?” asked Hartley, as they met.

“Is there anything wrong at home? I fear there is by your coming out here to meet me.”

“Well, Hartley, I kinder thought thar mout be sumpthin’ up, an’ ’twould be no great shakes fer me to slip out here an’ drap a flea in yer ear afore ye git to town. Tha’s been a couple uv slick skunks a prowlin’ ’round all day over the back part uv your farm, but mostly ’long the holler ’bout the spring. A while afore night they come to whar I was a ditchin’ an’ ast me ef you wanted to sell yer farm. I told ’em I guessed not for eny reasonable price. Now, I kalkerlate they smelt gas er ile, or mebby a gold mine somers ’round that spring, an’ ef I wuz you I’d go a leetle slow ’till I seed what their game wuz; an’ as they’re waitin’ at the hotel fer you, er mebby at your house by this time, you kin jist kinder be a stiffnin’ yer lip fer ’em.”

“All right, Joshua, I shall act on your suggestions and thank you for your kindness,” replied Hartley, as the two rode homeward together.

On arriving at home, Mr. Hartley found that the two men had gone immediately to his house after they had taken tea at the hotel, and had been waiting quite a while for his return.

They had talked the matter over, however, and arrived at the conclusion that it would be better to tell Mr. Hartley just what their object was, as they had been led to believe by Slathers that the farm could not be purchased for any reasonable sum; besides it might be better for their purposes to lease the land, if this could be done. So, after they had introduced themselves, Mr. Foster said:

“Mr. Hartley, we have discovered strong indications of oil on the western part of your farm, and we desire the exclusive right to put down one or more wells in that locality; and have called to see on what terms we can secure this right. We had thought of making you an offer on your land, but from what your neighbors say, you do not care to part with it. So we have determined to make you a liberal offer for a lease, or a share of the profits in the enterprise, if that would suit you better, provided you give us the exclusive control of all gas or oil that may be discovered by drilling wells on any part of your land.”

“Well, gentlemen, what are your propositions?” asked Hartley. “And what guarantee have I that you will faithfully carry out your part of the contract? And in what way do I become complicated with you in this business?”

“As to your first question, Mr. Hartley, we will pay you one hundred dollars for the exclusive lease, for gas or oil purposes only, of your land for fifty years, which might be better for you, since, if we fail to find either

gas or oil in paying quantities, you will be that much ahead and nothing out, while we will be at all the expense in drilling the wells. Then, as to our guarantee that we will faithfully carry out our part of the contract, we can give you plenty of evidence that we are experts in the business and that we are backed by sufficient capital to run it. But, first, we should like to know how our lease proposition strikes you."

"That would not suit me at all, gentlemen. I would not have such an incumbrance as that put upon the farm for fifty years for many times the sum you offer."

"Well, then, we will allow you five per cent. of the net profits if you will board our hands while they are drilling the well or wells, as the case may be, and we will furnish all the machinery, and be at all the expense, so that you need not become in any way complicated with us."

"Your propositions seem quite meager, gentlemen," said Hartley, "and I shall be in no hurry to accept them. But what will you charge me for drilling from one to five wells, none of them to be less than one thousand feet deep, or twenty-five feet in Trenton rock, you to furnish everything, including the casings for the wells?"

"We would rather make you another proposition, Mr. Hartley, before figuring on yours," said Mr. Foster, "and we will make it ten per cent. of the net profits; can't we, Mr. Luring?"

The latter named gentleman, Foster's companion, had permitted Mr. Foster to do nearly all the talking, but Hartley could see that of the two, Luring was the shrewder man.

"It strikes me that if we give Mr. Hartley ten per

cent. of the net profits, Mr. Foster, and we furnish all the machinery and do all the work, that we pay dearly for what is only a vague prospect, but as you have virtually made the offer, of course, we are in honor bound to stand by it."

"Well, gentlemen," replied Hartley; "I never wish to close an important contract without sufficient time for considering it in all its bearings, and as you have given me no answer on my proposition, perhaps we should each do better to study over the matter until ten o'clock to-morrow morning, when we shall be better able to arrive at satisfactory conclusions."

Messrs. Foster and Luring had now learned that Hartley understood himself, and was not to be "caught with chaff," so they agreed with him that it would be better to give the matter further thought, and said it would be satisfactory with them to meet him at any place that he would designate at ten o'clock the following morning, and asked:

"Where shall we meet you, Mr. Hartley; here at your house, or will you be over in town?"

"I shall be in town, at Mr. Benton's office, about the time agreed upon, and in the meantime will think over your proposition, and should like then to hear from you on mine."

This he said, not that he was in a condition to have even one well drilled without outside help, but he wished to test their estimate, as experts from the gas and oil fields, as to the prospect of finding anything valuable in this line on his farm.

"Very well, Mr. Hartley," answered Foster, "we will talk over the matter, but I am sure it would be better for you to accept one of our propositions, since,

by so doing, you run no risk, while we must sink money if we do not find gas or oil in paying quantities. But we will not detain you longer this evening, so will bid you good night."

* * * * *

"What do you think of those men and their propositions, Alice?" asked Mr. Hartley, after he and his wife had talked the matter over.

"It seems clearly apparent to me, Henry, that they feel very confident of success in finding something valuable by drilling, and that they intend to get control of the lion's share of whatever is found."

"Well, that is just the way it struck me, Alice, but I was not going to commit myself in any way to them until I had talked with you about it, as I wanted first a woman's quick perception in confirmation of my own views, for I have never been led into error by following your advice in any important matter."

"I thank you, Henry, for the honor you thus confer on me, and my daily prayer has been that I may ever be a true helpmeet to you in the highest and best sense; and the fact that you appreciate my efforts to aid you in every way is ample proof that my prayers have been answered."

"An angel could be no truer to my interests than you have always been, Alice, and in all my financial disasters you have never spoken an unkind word to me for endorsing for the parties who have wrecked both you and me, although you warned me of the danger before I did it. Many a wife, under the circumstances, would constantly be saying to her husband, 'I told you so; it's good enough for you,' and a thousand other aggravating

things, as if that could mend matters, or cause a man to have a higher appreciation of his wife."

"When I saw how deeply you were grieved over our loss, Henry, and that not for yourself but for your family, I should have forfeited the right to even the name of wife to so noble a man, if I had upbraided you for what you could not then help. But what answer had you thought of giving to those men to-morrow?"

"Well, Alice, I don't see that I can do better than to accept their last offer of ten per cent. I could not give them a fifty year lease, and we are not able to hire even one well drilled. But, if there is oil or gas to be had by drilling, we may as well have something out of it while we can. But what do you think I had better do? Now, here is where I need my wife's advice again, so let's hear what a woman will say."

"I should say wait, Henry."

"Wait? I hardly understand you, Alice. You know I must give them an answer in the morning."

"Well, I should tell them that the gas or oil, if there, will stay there until some better proposition is made than they have yet offered."

"But who is likely to make any other offer, Alice? We never before dreamed of there being anything worth drilling for."

"I can give you no reason for my feelings, Henry, but, as you have asked my advice, I have frankly told you what I should do, and now leave the whole matter for you to decide."

Mr. Hartley dropped his head in his hands in deep thought for some moments, and then looking up at his wife with a pleasant smile, said:

“Alice, you are a mystery to me, but I am going to take your advice and see how this matter will come out; although it seems to me it would have been better for us to accept their last offer, and let them go to work at once.”

So on meeting Messrs. Luring and Foster at Benton's office the following morning, he said:

“I have considered your propositions, gentlemen, and decided that I cannot accept either of them; but I am ready to hear what your figures would be on drilling one or more wells for me, as I mentioned last evening?”

“As we are leasing gas and oil lands, and not taking contracts for other parties, we have not figured on your proposition, Mr. Hartley,” replied Foster; “so if you are not disposed to entertain either of our propositions, we shall see other parties in this locality who are more enterprising.”

For a moment Mr. Hartley wavered, but as he had pledged his word to his wife, he would not break it, so asked them if they would give him thirty days time to accept or reject their last offer. This they refused to do, but agreed to allow him ten days, if he would give them a positive answer within that time; and this he finally consented to. So the gas experts left Caddo without prospecting any further at that time.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

CADDO STRIKES A "GUSHER."

GEORGE Hartley was the bearer of a long and fervent letter of thanks from his parents to his uncle, on his return to the City; also, his father's note for the five hundred dollar check. In a postscript his mother had added:

"Never can you know, dear brother, how highly we appreciate your kindness; and although we may never be able to return the favor, yet God, in His infinite goodness, will not let your generous act go unrewarded."

After reading this letter, Mr. Wentworth resolved to go up to Caddo and spend a day or two with his sister and brother-in-law, so the following Thursday found him seated with Henry Hartley's family at their mid-day repast. After dinner, Mr. Hartley told Mr. Wentworth all about the gas and oil experts that had recently visited his farm, and what propositions they had made, and asked him if he would like to walk over to the locality where they had proposed to sink a well.

"Certainly," said he, "I am beginning to take a great interest in this gas business, for I think it is destined yet to be a greater blessing to the world, than ever oil has been."

After examining the spring and the rocky formations around it, Mr. Wentworth said:

“Henry, my advice to you would be to have a well drilled here, at once, and if anything valuable is found, then control it yourself.”

“I had been thinking of organizing a stock company for that purpose, but am not in a condition to take stock enough to control it,” replied Hartley. “If I had the money I should prefer controlling the whole business myself.”

“Well, how would you like me as a silent partner in the enterprise, Henry? I have just sold a piece of City property, and have thirty thousand dollars lying in the bank that is doing me no good there. Can’t we two form the company, you furnishing the land and I the money?”

“I could not ask you to do that, George; but if you are willing to risk it, I shall be very happy to make such an arrangement, for I would much rather give you ninety per cent. of the profits, if there should be any, than to give it to those Pittsburg monopolists.”

“No, Henry, we will go in as equal partners, if you are willing to take the whole management of the business, as I have all I can well attend to in the City. There are plenty of men who are making a business of drilling such wells, and I should contract with some of them and have the work done immediately, so that if a good gas well is developed here you can pipe the town before cold weather sets in; and you can draw on me for the money at any time you need it.”

Two weeks after the above conversation, the dull thud of the drill and grunting of the engine were heard, day and night, on the Hartley farm, until Trenton rock was struck, at a depth of nine hundred and seventy-eight feet, when quite a volume of gas came pouring forth

from the shaft. All necessary precautions were then taken to prevent any accident, after which the drilling was continued twenty-three feet further, when the pressure of gas became so strong that the drill could no longer be worked with safety; and as it was drawn out, or almost lifted out by the rushing gas up the shaft, pieces of Trenton rock were blown out with such force as to render it dangerous for the workmen to remain near the derrick for several minutes. In short, the *Hartley well* was a "gusher." A telegram was sent to Mr. Wentworth, and the next train brought him to Caddo.

After fifty feet of pipe was attached to the casing, in order to conduct the escaping gas a safe distance from the well, and then fired, the roaring, deafening sound of the rushing gas, and the billowing flame, could be heard for miles away, and hundreds of men, women and children gathered to see this monster wonder, which, at night, lighted up the heavens and reminded them of some of the ancient pictures of Pandemonium turned loose. If a happier man than Henry Hartley could be found on the ground, it was Mr. Wentworth.

"Now is the time, Henry, to organize your stock company," remarked Wentworth, as the two entered the library after tea. "Caddo must utilize this grand fuel, and it will cost far more to pipe the town than it has to drill the well."

"True, George, but how are we to control the stock if it gets into the hands of a large company?"

"That will be easy enough to manage, Henry. We will organize on sixty thousand dollars capital, and the well should be put in at ten thousand, or more. Then I will take thirty thousand additional stock, so there

will only be twenty thousand more to secure, and this should be so generally distributed over the town, amongst your wealthier men and large consumers, that no rival company would have sufficient inducement for coming in. As soon as this is done, we must secure a charter or permit from the town council to pipe the streets of Caddo, and then we shall be ready for business."

"Well, George, I see you have a better business head than I, and I shall follow your advice; so if you think best we will walk over to Mr. Benton's office and have him draw up the necessary papers for organizing the company."

Thus matters were so arranged, that in two weeks from the day Mr. Wentworth received the telegram that a "gusher" was struck on the Hartley farm, the first and only successful natural gas company that Caddo has ever had, was fully organized and ready for business, with George Wentworth, president, and Henry Hartley, secretary and treasurer. The new fuel being less expensive and so much more cleanly and convenient than coal or wood, nearly every citizen in Caddo soon became patrons of the Hartley gas company; but several weeks intervened after the organization of the company before the town was piped and ready to supply its patrons with gas.

"Henry," said Mr. Wentworth a short time after Caddo was piped and most of the citizens using the gas, "I want you to take up the note that Dr. Blackfoot holds against you. It isn't the thing for him to hold a mortgage any longer on your farm, as that practically covers the gas well, in addition to the farm."

"I should gladly do so, George, if I had the money,

but with the exception of what I have in my hands as treasurer of the company, I could not raise a thousand dollars, and I dare not use a dollar of the company's money for individual purposes."

"Neither do I *wish* you to. Here is my check for what you say is the full amount to date, and I want you to take up that paper and have the mortgage released and canceled before I go back to the City. You may give me your note, payable in twelve months, for the face of the check. I want to see you out of that man's clutches without further delay."

"George Wentworth," exclaimed Hartley, as the grateful tears dimmed his eyes, "you have been more than a brother to me, and God only can reward you for this great kindness."

And the two strong men clasped hands in silence for a moment, when Mr. Wentworth replied :

"God *has* richly rewarded me in all I have done for you, as my stock in this gas plant is the best property by far that I now hold. Beside this, your noble son, my namesake, is fast winning the place in my heart, by his thoughtful kindness, which was once occupied only by my *own* boy, *your* namesake, Henry, and anything I can do for George and you gives me more real satisfaction than any amount of *money possibly* could, since you fully repay me with your hearty appreciation and kindness."

Thus was Henry Hartley's home and farm redeemed six months before the final payment fell due, to the great chagrin of Dr. Blackfoot, who, for more than four years, had looked upon this valuable property as practically in his own possession. The proceeds of the farm, added to Hartley's salary as general business manager,

together with his dividends on his gas stock, amounted to more than enough before the year was out to meet the two notes given to his brother-in-law, so he wrote, asking him to send them up to the Caddo bank, as he wished to take them up. But Mr. Wentworth had put the five hundred dollar note with some other papers, in a sealed package and given it to George, with instructions to keep the package safely until he should call for it. So he wrote in reply that he had transferred the first note to another party, and as it was not in his possession, it would be out of the question for him to send it to the Caddo bank as requested; but added that, as the note would not be due until Christmas, it could make but little difference to Hartley if it was not paid before maturity.

All this time Mr. and Mrs. Hartley had strictly adhered to their rule of systematically giving the tenth of their net income to benevolent and religious purposes; but now that their income was so great, Mr. Hartley thought this too large a sum to give, so he said to his wife one evening as they sat alone in the library:

“Alice, I have been thinking that we should not be required to give so largely to benevolence as the tenth will be, now that this sum is becoming so great. Why it will run into many hundreds of dollars annually, and no one will *expect* us to give so largely.”

“Henry,” replied Mrs. Hartley, “God has blessed the little, and he is able to blast the much, and unless we can find liberty in *His sacred Word* to withhold the tithe, and appropriate it to our own use, simply because it has increased to a large amount, we surely cannot safely take such a step, no matter what others may do or think. And as our heavenly Father has cared for,

and blessed us in our adversity, let us not be so ungrateful as to forget Him now in our prosperity."

"Dear Alice," said Hartley, clasping his wife in his arms and imprinting a warm kiss on her cheek, "how often you have been my gaurdian angel; for it was by taking your advice that our present prosperity was secured, and I see you are right in this matter, as you generally are in everything. We will not only *continue* giving the tenth as before, but should we see necessity for it, will give even more, as God prospers us."

Many, from that day, were the destitute and afflicted who received aid from Mr. and Mrs. Hartley in so quiet a manner, that none but God and the givers ever knew from whom the aid came, and in this service of making others happy, they soon found more real pleasure than they had ever before known; thus joyously realizing the full meaning of their Master's words: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

CHAPTER XL.

AN OLD MAID THWARTS THE COLLEGE STUDENT.

NORA had been in Miss North's school more than a year, and while she had made commendable progress in her studies, yet she had suffered intensely with home-sickness.

"Why," thought she, as she sat in her room late one Saturday night, "why do my parents keep me here in this prison of a school? More than a year has now passed since I saw any of the loved ones in Caddo, yet they say I must stay here another year. Oh, what an age it seems! If George were there I should be more anxious than ever to go. But why need I care for him? He has forgotten me long ago, or he surely would have written. No, he could not entirely forget the girl whose life he risked his own to save. It is not that. He is disgusted with me for writing such a gushing letter to him. But how could I help it? I *did* love him. I *do* love him to-night, despite all my efforts to forget him. Oh, if I only knew his heart as I do my own. Yes, it would even be a relief to know that he does not despise me. I see him so often in my dreams, and his look has always been full of loving sympathy, just as it was in Caddo. I wonder what he is doing to-night. Most likely poring over some musty old doctor book, or—ugh!" and a shudder ran through her soul as she finished the

sentence, "possibly dissecting some hideous, frightful corpse, in the pursuit of his cherished ambition. But why do I let my thoughts run so constantly to him, when I have no assurance that he ever gives a passing thought to me? Can it be possible, as some claim, that mind acts on mind, even at so great a distance? If so, I shall compel him to think of me in my loneliness to-night."

Strange as it may seem, this was the very night that George Hartley and Stuart Stanley were telling each other of their sore heart troubles, but some weeks intervened before the latter returned to Albany on a visit to his parents.

"Please see Miss Blackfoot, if possible, Stanley, while you are in Albany," said young Hartley, as the former stepped on the platform of an east-bound train at Cincinnati. "I am sure you can find out why she never answered my letters if any one can, and I would rather know the worst than be kept forever in doubt and suspense."

"All right, George, I'll see her if she is in Albany, unless that lynx-eyed old maid out-generals me, and I hardly think she will."

Soon after Stanley's arrival in Albany, he called at Miss North's school and requested to see Miss Blackfoot, saying that he had "a message for her from one of her old classmates of Caddo."

"You can leave the message with me," said Miss North, "and I can give it to her when she comes down to my room; but she is engaged with her studies now, and I do not wish my pupils disturbed by callers during study hours."

“Very well, Miss North; but if you will please tell me when she will be at leisure, I will call at that hour, as I do not wish to intrude on her time, nor to violate the rules of your school.”

“If it is a matter of so much importance as to require your calling again, you had better leave the word with me while you are here, as I do not wish frequent calls made by gentlemen on my pupils while they are under my care.”

“Miss North, I have come as a gentleman with a message for Miss Blackfoot, that concerns no one else; and as it will only take a few moments to deliver it, I shall not leave without complying with my promise. So I shall wait until the young lady is at leisure.”

This he said with the coolest firmness, feeling sure now, that the message would never be delivered, if Miss North could prevent it.

“Well,” said she, “if it is so important as that, I suppose I can call her down to my parlor, but whatever you have to communicate to her must be done in my presence.”

“Certainly, Miss North, I surely have no wish to say anything to a pupil of yours that would be improper for *any lady* to hear; while, as I said before, what I have to say to her concerns no one else. Beside, *you* are well enough acquainted with me to know whether I am a gentleman or not.”

“Oh, certainly, Mr. Stanley, I know you are a gentleman, and all that; but my rules are such that no young man need expect such privileges as you ask. Yet I shall suspend them just this one time, since you urge it so strongly.”

So saying, she left the room, but soon returned, followed by the most beautiful young lady that Mr. Stanley had ever seen. Miss North snapped out an informal introduction, which was rather embarrassing to both parties, after which Mr. Stanley said :

“ Miss Blackfoot, I am just home on a short visit from the Cincinnati Medical College, and while there I formed a very pleasant acquaintance with an old class-mate and friend of yours, Mr. George Hartley, and he requested me to call on you and give you his kindest regards, and——”

“ If that is your business here, Mr. Stanley,” interrupted Miss North, “ this interview must cease immediately ; this is no place for carrying on a flirtation, even by proxy ;” and before Stanley could finish his sentence, Nora was hurried out of the parlor and back to her room, more thoroughly bewildered than she had been at any time since entering Miss North’s school, as this amiable (?) lady had told her while bringing her down to the parlor, that a worthless adventurer who was always seeking an introduction to every handsome young lady, had called for her, and she could not get him to leave until he had seen her. Notwithstanding Miss North’s efforts, however, to prejudice Nora against her caller, there was something so sad, yet frank and manly in his expression and bearing toward her, that she could not believe him to be such a character as this lady (?) had pictured him ; and there was now a faint ray of hope in her heart that George had not entirely forgotten her. Yet she had been hurried off without an opportunity of sending him a single word in response to his kind greeting through Stanley to her. So when Stanley had to report this fact to Nora’s anxious lover,

he felt but little hope that his message had met with a kind response in her heart; for, thought he, “She might have sent me some word of recognition if she cared a straw for me.” But neither he nor Stanley knew what had been said to her just before entering Miss North’s parlor, hence neither could account for her silence on any other ground than indifference.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ANGEL OF DEATH.

IT was the last of September and near the close of the second year of Nora's absence from home, when typhoid fever, in its most malignant form, became an epidemic in Caddo. But few families escaped its ravages, thus making it impossible for the afflicted ones to secure nurses enough to properly care for their sick. Both Nora's mother and sister, Kate, were stricken down with the dreaded fever; and Belle's second child was less than a week old, and her first born not yet two years old, quite helpless from spinal disease and sore eyes, with almost total blindness, which rendered it a constant care. It was now a matter of necessity that Nora should come home at once. Accordingly her father wrote her, enclosing his draft for a sufficient amount to settle her bills and pay her expenses home, adding :

"We are all sick, Nora, and as it is uncertain when you can be spared from home again, if ever, you must settle your bills, pack your trunks and come home by first train, if possible, after receiving this letter. I would go and accompany you home, but your mother and Kate are too sick for me to leave them, while I lack much of feeling well myself. Hoping to have you with us before the week closes, I am, as ever, your pa,

R. BLACKFOOT."

Nora was but human, and it must be admitted that there was an unusual feeling of gladness in her heart on reading this letter. And why not? It meant a release from what, to her, had been little less than a two years' imprisonment. Then, as she had heard nothing before of their sickness at home, she could not realize the darkness of the cloud that overshadowed her father's house; hence she did not feel guilty of wrong doing, when reproved by Miss North for her light-heartedness and little snatches of song that occasionally escaped her lips as she hastily packed her trunks on the morning she received her father's letter.

A wreck on the road had thrown Nora's train two hours late, so that it was near midnight when she arrived in Caddo. The agent, however, had told her father that the train was three hours late, so no one had gone to meet her at the depot, and she had to walk home through a cold October rain that was falling. As her overshoes and extra wraps were in her trunks, her feet, as well as her arms and shoulders were quite wet before she reached home.

Both her mother and Kate were unconscious from the effects of their raging fever, and were almost constantly calling for Nora when she entered the room, where her father was busily engaged in waiting on them. As it was impossible to have them in separate rooms and give them the attention they both required in their delirium, with no reliable nurse to help him, the large, airy parlor had been temporarily converted into a special room for the sick, by Dr. Blackfoot.

Under the excitement Nora's wet feet and clothing were forgotten, and as her father was nearly crazed from

loss of sleep, he readily yielded to her entreaties to lie down for two or three hours' rest, after giving her directions as to patients' medicine, etc.

Whether from the soothing effects of a woman's hand or not, both of the sufferers soon became more quiet, so Nora did not call her father until the gray light of morning had dispelled the shadows of night, when a sense of extreme chilliness was creeping over her, and she was painfully conscious of the danger in remaining longer in her damp clothing. Her father cursed his carelessness in not having her to change her clothing immediately on her arrival, saying:

"Now you will be sick next, and our house is already a hospital. I don't see why the devil I didn't think of your wet clothing last night when you came in. D——n the luck! everything goes wrong with me of late. But, come hurry off with your wet clothes, and then go into the dining room, where there is a good gas fire for you to warm by and heat your feet. We cannot have a fire in this room while their fever is so high."

Although Nora soon had on dry clothing and warmed her feet well by the dining room fire, yet it was nearly noon before the cold chills ceased creeping over her, after which a dull headache oppressed her, until she was relieved by an afternoon nap. She then assured her father that she felt quite well again, and took her place in the sick room, greatly to his relief, for neither patient was gaining, and Kate was evidently growing worse. They had both been sick ten days and no abatement of the fever had been effected. Although both frequently called Nora, yet only momentary intervals of consciousness revealed the fact that they knew

she was with them, for, over and over again, Kate repeated the words:

“When will Nora come? When will Nora come? Papa said she was coming; why don’t she come?”

And her mother’s expression was:

“Nora will come to-morrow, Nora will come to-morrow.”

The condition of the sufferers continued about the same for three days after Nora’s arrival, when Mrs. Blackfoot’s fever abated and she recovered consciousness, but Kate’s fever rather ran higher, and her almost constant cry was:

“Why don’t Nora come? When will she come?”

“I am here, darling; don’t you know me?” said Nora as she pushed the dark hair from the hot brow and fanned her fevered cheek. “Nora is here with you. Don’t you know me? I have come to stay with you and make you well.”

A wild, unnatural stare was Kate’s only response, and she soon began again:

“Why don’t Nora come? I want Nora.”

This was too much for the girl who had been so happy on her way homeward, after so long an absence, and she sobbed out as she bent over her delirious sister, and kissed her fevered brow:

“Oh, if she only knew me! How can I make her know I am with her?” And Nora’s hot tears fell rapidly over the face of her unconscious, yet suffering sister.

Another dark and gloomy week passed, with but little change in Mrs. Blackfoot, while Kate constantly grew worse, when it was clearly seen that life’s end for her was near.

“Oh, if she only could know me before she goes;”

sobbed Nora, as she bent lovingly over her ; at which the child slowly opened her eyes and faintly whispered :

“ Nora—Nora—Oh, I’m—so—glad—you’ve come, I—love you—Nora—and I’m—so—sorry—I made—you cry—before—you—went—away. I love—you—and—George—and—every one. Let me—kiss—you,—Nora. Put—your arm—around me—and—lift—me up.”

Nora gently lifted the wasted form of her dying sister, and held her in her arms with all the tender fondness that even a loving mother could have bestowed, until the last moment came, when a sweet smile played over the face of the dying child as she whispered :

“ Good—by—Nora. We’ll—meet—again—up—yonder.”

And doubtless the eyes that then closed on earth, were forever opened to the grand beauties of heaven.

This was the first death in Dr. Blackfoot’s family, and the shock was so great to his sick wife, that for days following this sad ordeal but little hope was entertained of her recovery. Arch had also been too ill to be of much service in the sick room, and Fin was utterly worthless and untrustworthy in such a place, while Belle, his wife, was not in a condition to render any material aid. The consequence was, the Doctor himself broke down under the long continued strain, so that he was now unable to render further intelligent services at his wife’s bedside, for he, too, was now taking the same fever. This disease had become so prevalent in Caddo, and vicinity, that no efficient help could be obtained, and Nora saw that everything now depended upon her.

Mrs. Dr. Truworthy was the only physician in Caddo that was now able to give any professional attention to

the sick, as the other doctors were all stricken down, partly from overwork and exposure, with the same malady. Had it not been that George Hartley had just then returned from the City, having finished his medical course, doubtless many more fatalities would have occurred than did, as it was impossible for Dr. Truworthy to answer half the calls that were made upon her.

George was not only a "born nurse," but was now also a well read physician, as he had for years devoted all of his spare time to the acquisition of medical knowledge, and for the past year had bent his whole energies, with the best of advantages, to the solution of its deepest mysteries. Yet he was keenly conscious of the fact that, with all of his acquired knowledge from books and theoretical training in college, without the opportunity of putting this knowledge into practice in the sick room, it could be of but little advantage to him. Mrs. Dr. Truworthy had been very kind to him, and had always given him free access to her large medical library; hence he felt himself under deep obligations to her, which he acknowledged in the following manner the next morning after his arrival at home.

"Doctor," said he, on entering her office, "I am under lasting obligations to you for the great kindness and many favors you have shown me in the past; so now let me, in any way possible, be of some service to you."

"Well, George," said she, taking him warmly by the hand, "there never was a time when I needed your services half so much as now. I have not had my clothing off for a night's rest for more than a week, and still have not been able to answer half the calls that have been made upon me. There has just been an

urgent call for me to go to Dr. Blackfoot's and I want you to go with me, as I shall have to leave the cases there, as well as several others of his patients, in your care for the present at least, for my own regular customers must have my services first."

"Oh, Doctor!" said George, "*anywhere* but there; I'll take a dozen other places, but please don't ask me to go to Dr. Blackfoot's."

"George Hartley," replied Dr. Truworthy, "I see you have your first lesson to learn in the general practice of medicine, and not until you learn that, can I consistently call you *Doctor* Hartley. The true physician must never let any personal matters swerve him from his duties toward the sick. If you really wish to help me, you can best do so by taking the patients that I wish to put under your care."

Little did she know the struggle that was going on in the young man's heart, as many of the incidents of the past five years flashed through his mind; the proud and haughty bearing of the family, the sneers and gross insults that had been heaped upon him on account of his poverty; for while he was not by any means poverty stricken *now*, yet the transition to comparative wealth had been so sudden, that he scarcely realized the fact that his father now stood the peer of any of Caddo's citizens in this respect, while he, himself, was not a *poor* man, since his uncle had virtually adopted him as a son. Then how could he bear the ordeal of Dr. Blackfoot's criticism in the sick room? Besides, there was the proud, beautiful girl just returned from the New York boarding school, who had not even deigned to answer his letters, nor send a single word of recognition by his College friend, Stanley. Yet, through the kind, but

firm words of Dr. Truworthy, he quickly overcame all of these feelings, and said:

“I know you are right, Doctor, and I will go wherever duty calls me, if by that means I can the better help you.”

“Thank you, my brave Doctor Hartley,” said she, “you are now taking your first step toward a *successful* practice in your chosen profession. But we have no more time for talk, as grave duties call us to earnest work. Come with me and I will place more patients under your care the first day of your practice, than any young physician ever had in this county before.”

And as the latter part of this sentence was uttered, they were on their way to Dr. Blackfoot's residence, where they were met at the door by a servant, who led them to the large parlor, which, on account of its spacious airiness, had been appropriated for the sick room. The Doctor occupied a bed on the north, and his wife another on the south side of the room, thus Nora was kept almost constantly busy in attending to their wants; as her father was now delirious the greater part of the time from the effects of his raging fever, while her mother was nearing that critical period in her disease when everything depended on watchful and careful nursing.

Though an introduction was not necessary, yet Dr. Truworthy said:

“Miss Nora, I take pleasure in introducing to you Dr. Hartley, whom I shall leave in charge here, and several other places from which I have received urgent calls, as it will be impossible for me to give the professional attention to so many patients that the grave character of the cases will require.”

While this was no time for formalities, yet Nora stepped forward and gave George her hand in such a cordial manner, as she said, "You are a thousand times welcome here, Mr. Hartley," that he felt half ashamed that he had hesitated a moment in coming.

Dr. Blackfoot's temperature was then six degrees above normal, his fever being so high that he was wholly unconscious of his surroundings, and had not been able for hours to retain anything that had been administered for his relief. Several questions were asked Nora as to what the condition of the patients had been through the night, and after making a careful examination of both sufferers, a short consultation was held and a plan of operations agreed upon, one of which was a sponge bath for Nora's father, as the best means of reducing his temperature. This, young Hartley himself administered, while Dr. Truworthy called on another patient near by; after which she requested him to accompany her in her calls on several other patients that required more medical attention than she could possibly give them, and made arrangements with such for him to take charge of them, with the understanding that she would call occasionally, if it was found necessary.

Late in the afternoon Dr. Hartley called again at Dr. Blackfoot's and found a slight improvement in both the Doctor and his wife; the former perspiring slightly, and his temperature two degrees lower, so that he had intervals of consciousness. At one of these times he looked up at George, and holding out his hand in a half friendly way, said:

"Glad to see you, George; they say you have come to help us. We are in a devil of a fix, and we need

help badly enough, that's certain; so you can just go ahead, and I'll pay you well for it when I get on my feet again."

"All right, Doctor, I'll do all I can for you. I have come to assist here at the request of Dr. Truworthy, who is so nearly exhausted by the heavy tax of attending to other physicians' patients, besides her own, through this epidemic, that she fears she cannot stand up under the extra work much longer without some relief, and I am glad that my services will not be offensive to you."

"A man must not be too nice when he's down, George, but what worries me most now is, Nora will be down shortly, if she is not relieved in some way, and it seems that no efficient nurse can now be had for love or money. She has scarcely had an hour's undisturbed rest since she came home."

"I will see that she is relieved of all care to-night, Doctor, so please give yourself no further anxiety on that point, for it is important that you, too, should rest as quietly as possible to-night."

The first week of the young Doctor's care of his sick patients, brought but little change; but at the end of the second week, material improvement in both the Doctor and his wife was clearly apparent, and not until this was the case, could Nora be prevailed upon to leave them, day or night, long at a time; hence she and George were thrown much of the time together. Yet there had been no opportunity for anything more than commonplace words between them since their meeting, after more than two years' separation. But whenever their eyes met, the language that had been flashed from these "windows of the soul" to each other, years before, was

repeated with redoubled emphasis; yet strange as it may seem, this language was not understood by either. In him she now saw a handsome, tall, broad shouldered young man, with clean shaven face, except a dark heavy mustache, and carrying himself with a dignity that impressed her as the very ideal and embodiment of true manhood.

“But,” thought she, “he cares but little for me; else, why did he never answer my letters? No, he is now a full-fledged professional man, and worships only the god of fame and ambition. His whole thoughts are bent on building for himself a name in the medical world. How eloquently he talks on this subject, but has never yet alluded to any of our past life or associations. I half believe now that Mr. Stanley called on me at Miss North’s school out of curiosity, and that George knew nothing of his intended visit, or at least never sent the word that Stanley claimed he did. But how shall I ever know? I dare not ask him. No; if he really cares anything for me, he surely will make it known in some way, without my making myself offensive to him again, as I did in my second letter.”

These, and similar thoughts, flitted through Nora’s mind when the more serious thoughts of caring for her sick parents were not occupying her attention. And as she had grown still more beautiful, and had fully developed into all that is lovely in womanhood, George saw in her his only earthly idol. Hence, as he watched her naturally graceful movements, with fawn like step and soft, delicate touch, as she anxiously ministered to the wants of her suffering parents, he saw so much of the real woman in her, that he was constantly in fear lest he should reveal so much of his heart to her that she

would shrink from him in disgust, before he could be excused from the duties he had promised Dr. Truworthy he would perform. Although he was having excellent success with all of his patients, and now clearly saw his ability to work into a lucrative practice in Caddo and vicinity, yet every day he was thrown in the presence of Nora, brought additional proof that he could not long remain there without any assurance that he could some day claim this lovely woman for his wife.

“How can I win her?” thought he. “She does not seem to avoid me, and yet she seems so timid, I dare not even approach the subject that lies nearest my heart. I once thought if I had wealth I should have no fears of my ability to win her. But I now see clearly that neither wealth nor position can ever capture her heart.”

Thus while these lovers were daily in each other's presence, they were in their imaginations, farther than ever apart.

CHAPTER XLII.

A MOTHER'S PRAYER AND THE BETROTHAL.

“If there is aught, surpassing thought,
Unselfish in its motive;
A mother's love, born from above,
Is surely most devoted.”

DR. Hartley had not only thoroughly studied the science of medicine, but also the laws of health, ventilation, and scientific or hygienic nursing, so that much of his success with his patients was achieved through his earnest application of this knowledge in their treatment, for he relied far more on the latter, and much less on strong medicines, than do most young physicians.

There had been no worse case in Caddo than that of Dr. Blackfoot, and few worse than that of his wife, and it was admitted by all, that the skillful treatment, and especially the intelligent nursing, was all that saved his life. But, even with all this, nearly a month passed before he could leave his bed, and his health was never fully restored, for the fever fell in his lower limbs, and so severely in his left, that he never afterward had good use of it, but generally walked with a crutch, and never without a cane.

As soon as it was evident that the Doctor and his wife were in a fair way to recover, Dr. Hartley began giving much more of his time to other patients; and as

the fame of his success in so many bad cases spread abroad, he received many calls from the country, as well as from new patients in town. In all this work he threw his utmost energies, since, by so doing, he found a partial safety valve to his pent-up heart troubles. But the quick intuition of his mother readily discovered the cloud that darkened his hopes, and she feared the consequences; for she was justly proud of her son, and the grand success he seemed to be making in his chosen profession, yet knowing full well that no man can make a complete and permanent success in life's work unaided by a good, pure woman, whom, above all others, he enshrines in his heart's richest affections, and honors with the sacred name of wife.

Yet the cloud was to be darker for the young Doctor than ever before. Nora had not fully recovered from the effects of the cold taken on the night of her return home, and now that her parents were out of danger, her vital forces, which had been stretched to the utmost in caring for them, gave way, and she, too, was stricken down with the fever.

"Hope deferred," not only "maketh the heart sick," but also has a fearfully depressing effect on the general health. If George had boldly opened his heart to her, as she thought he had had ample opportunity to do, if he really cared for her as she did for him, it would have proved a magical tonic, worth far more to her than his medicines, or, what she now thought was his cold, scientific nursing. For, through fear of offending her parents, and of a repulse from her, the young Doctor had carried himself in her presence with an apparent cold dignity, which was not only unnatural with him, but oppressive to her. He seemed to even avoid her

touch; but little did she dream that any touch from her hand, however light, sent such an electric thrill through his very being, that it was with the greatest effort he could, at such times, resist the temptation to clasp her in his arms, and reveal to her the fearful tempest that was raging in his soul.

Under this condition of affairs Nora's fever constantly increased until, on the fourth day after taking her bed, she was unconscious the greater part of the time. As neither her father nor mother were yet able to sit up more than a few minutes at a time, Dr. Hartley had suggested that his mother would come and stay with Nora a part of the time, if this would be satisfactory to the family, since it was thought best that she should still occupy her own room, there being no other suitable room for her below.

"Well, George," said Dr. Blackfoot, not willing to recognize him as a doctor who might yet become a formidable rival, "we are in a helpless condition and shall have to let you manage matters for us as best you can, and if you and your mother can help us out until we can get on our feet again, we will pay you well for it."

But Mrs. Blackfoot, with far more soul, and less jealousy in her thoughts, said:

"Yes, George, you have shown yourself to be not only an excellent doctor and nurse, but also a true gentleman as well, and we can, with all confidence, trust Nora's case to you, believing you will leave nothing in human power undone to save her, for I am sure that she and you have always been the best of friends."

"Thank you," answered Dr. Hartley as he took Mrs. Blackfoot's hand warmly in his own, "I sincerely

thank you for this expression of confidence in my ability and honor. *I will save her if, in human power, it can be done.*"

"I believe you will," was the feeble, yet kind response from the invalid mother.

The general sickness had considerably abated by this time, and as two of the other physicians had sufficiently recovered to resume their practice, Dr. Hartley made arrangements with them and Dr. Truworthy to take all other urgent cases off his hands, and from that day devoted almost every hour of his time to the one more dear to him than all of earth besides. The old widow lady who had been assisting as nurse in Mr. Warren's family was needed no longer there, as they were now able, with their servants' help, to get along without her, so she was put in charge of the patients in the sick room below, with instructions to help up stairs in Nora's room when called for.

Another week slowly passed, with no change in Nora for the better, but on the contrary, it was evident that her chances for recovery would soon be hopeless unless the fearful ravages of her disease could be speedily checked. Five more sad days dragged wearily on without a ray of hope to cheer the anxious, sleepless watchers. It had been twenty-four hours since she had given the least sign of consciousness. She seemed now to lie in that fatal stupor, so common in the last stages of this dreaded fever. Her feet and hands were growing cold. Hot cloths were applied to them and everything done that human ingenuity could devise to resuscitate her, but all seemed futile and unavailing.

It was midnight. George and his mother sat watching alone by the bedside. To all human appearances the

sufferer could scarcely survive until morning. Up to this time young Dr. Hartley had manfully restrained his feelings, but could now do so no longer. So kneeling by her bedside, and bending lovingly over her, he sealed his first lover's kiss, with his own hot tears on her cheek, sobbing so piteously:

“Oh, Nora, darling Nora, how can I give you up?”

Then looking appealingly to his mother as he now fully realized his own utter helplessness in the presence of death, he said:

“Mother, God alone can save her now. Will you ask him?”

This was all the grief stricken lover could say, for his heart seemed almost bursting with emotion.

“Yes, George,” answered she, and kneeling by her son at the bedside of the unconscious sufferer, she did ask with a faith that seemed to take no denial, that God, for Christ's sake, would pity her poor boy, who was pleading so earnestly for her restoration, and give back the precious life, which it seemed he was now taking; but ended her earnest prayer with that sentence of confident resignation to the decree of heaven, “Yet not our will, but thine, Oh, God, be done.”

Reader, God does hear and answer the prayer of faith from such a Christian mother as was Mrs. Hartley, and He gave signal proof of it in this case; for, soon after the last words of the supplication were uttered, Nora slowly opened her eyes and faintly whispered:

“Who—was it? Who—called—me—darling?—Who—kissed me—and called—me back?”

George had turned away before these words were uttered, for he felt that he could not see her die, so only

his mother had heard the faintly whispered words. But he heard his mother's answer :

“It was George who kissed you, Nora, and called you darling. You will live for his sake, won't you?”

A sweet smile and a softly whispered “yes,” was the quick response, and George was by the bedside in time to catch both.

“She will live, George,” said his mother. “God has answered our prayer, and given back her life to you. Blessed be His name.”

“Amen,” fervently responded the now truly humble, but gladdened and hopeful lover.

Nora's fever gradually abated, and her improvement, while slow for a time, was constant from that midnight hour. But not until her recovery was assured, two weeks later, did George absent himself an hour at a time, day or night, from her room.

One day when he was sitting alone with her in her room, after she was able to rest reclining in an invalid's chair, he took her thin, white hand in his own, and asked her if she remembered the night she promised to live for his sake.

“I hardly know, George. I had a sweet dream one night, and I thought I heard your mother and the angels talking, and I thought a great, strong angel came to me and kissed me, and asked me to go with him, and, oh, I wanted so much to go with him, but something held me back. Then I slept a long, long time, and when I awoke you and your mother were with me. And, George, do you know I have so often wished that sweet dream would come to me again?”

“Nora, it was not an angel, but a great, ugly, awkward man, who kissed you. But he thought you were dying then, or he would not have dared to take such liberty.”

“Who was it, George? No man but my pa ever kissed me before, and I know that could not have been him, for he has not been able to come to my room yet.”

“It was one who would lay his life at your feet, Nora, for the privilege of kissing you a dozen times every day of your sweet life. One who has always loved you, and one who risked his own life to save yours years ago.” And as her sweet, loving smile, beamed fondly upon him through her tears, he clasped her unresisting form in his arms, and said, as he imprinted the betrothal kiss on her willing cheek :

“Nora, darling Nora, you are mine forever.”

“Yes, George, dear George, yours alone forever. But why have you never shown me your heart before? It seems to me I have always loved you, and I have not seen a day, since you so boldly risked your life to save mine, that I would not have freely given a thousand lives, if I could, to save yours.”

Then followed a long talk about their attempted correspondence, and other misunderstandings, and when both clearly understood each other, Nora asked :

“George, why are your cheeks so red? You are not well to-day and you have a feverish breath. Arn’t you really sick? Please tell me.”

“Don’t give yourself any anxiety about me, Nora. I never felt so well in my life as I do now that I know you are mine.”

But here the curtain must drop on this scene, and open on one far less pleasant for both author and reader.

CHAPTER XLIII.

ARRESTED AND CONVICTED.

THE reader will remember a character by the name of John Long, who was mentioned in connection with the plot of Blackfoot, Buckwether & Co., against Joshua Slathers, on the alleged counterfeit bill. This man, Long, proved to be a detective sent out by parties in Albany, N. Y., to assist them in working up a murder case. The reader will also recollect the tragic death of Dr. Blackfoot's father and step-mother; and also Dr. Johnson, who attended the old gentleman in his fatal illness, together with the notes he made of the case and filed away with his private papers at the time of Mr. Blackfoot's death. These papers had been put in the hands of Mr. Clark, Dr. Johnson's attorney, who was assisting the Doctor's widow in managing her business.

Frederick Conger, alias John Long, the detective, stepped into Mr. Clark's office one day on legal business a short time before his first appearance in Caddö. The two were talking over a murder case in which Conger had been of great service to Mr. Clark, in ferreting out the guilty parties, when the lawyer said:

"Fred, here's another job for you, if the scent isn't too cold for you to strike the right trail."

He then related to the detective what Dr. Johnson had told him, and further showed him the notes the

Doctor had made with reference to the case at the time.

“I wish you had given me these points years ago, Mr. Clark, for old Mr. Blackfoot’s brother offered me two thousand dollars reward for the murderer in that case, if it could be proven that he had been poisoned, but there seemed to be no clew to work from. Why didn’t you show me those papers at the time.”

“Because I knew nothing of their existence myself then, Conger, as they did not come into my hands until some time after, when I was so busy with matters pertaining to Dr. Johnson’s estate, that I neglected the matter at that time, and as I knew nothing of any reward being offered, I could see nothing to be gained by agitating the matter, especially after the death of Mrs. Blackfoot, for the estate was then almost immediately squandered. But I think Drs. Sutherland and Banks may yet be able to throw some light on the subject; if so, they may aid you in getting some reliable clew to the mystery.”

Mr. Conger called on the doctors referred to, and then on Mr. Blackfoot’s brother and asked him if his reward of two thousand dollars could still be claimed if the party could be found and convicted who had poisoned his brother.

“Yes, sir, Mr. Conger,” answered he, “or the one who poisoned his wife either, for if one was poisoned, there is but little doubt in my mind but that both were, and probably by the same hand. But I have but little hope that the guilty party can ever be convicted at this late date; yet, if you have any clew that you consider reliable, why, go ahead, and if you are successful the money shall be yours.”

Mr. Conger had not been working a great while on the case, when light came to him from a quarter least anticipated. He was out late one night looking up some evidence in a burglary case, and was disguised as a Catholic priest, when an Irishman accosted him in great excitement, exclaiming:

“Be the powers, how lucky; an’ it’s meself that was huntin’ for a praste for a doyin’ woman. Coom along wid me, before she doies entoirly.”

The detective instinct was alert in a moment in the disguised man, so he asked:

“Does she wish to make any confessions?”

“Yis, sir, it’s that same she towld me entoirly. She says she helped to poison a rich owld man and his woife, an’ she can’t doie azy ’till she sees the praste.”

“All right then, let us hasten on,” said Conger, and ten minutes later was at the bedside of the dying woman, listening to the whole story of the slow poisoning of Dr. Blackfoot’s father and step-mother, and that, too, in the presence of three others, who were kindly administering to Bridget O’Leary’s wants in that sad hour, for it was she who was now dying. After hearing the whole story, he tried to give her about what consolation he supposed a priest would have done under the circumstances. And after ascertaining the names and residences of the witnesses present, he reverently (?) folded his robes about him and walked out into the darkness.

Three days after the death of Bridget O’Leary, Mr. Conger’s testimony was submitted to Mr. Clark, who was a notary public as well as a lawyer, and his statements were fully corroborated by the three witnesses who had heard the dying woman’s confession. The

proof was now ample for conviction, but where was the surviving guilty party, Richard Blackfoot?

As there was a large family connection, and many of them having removed to the central and western states, the next point was to learn beyond question where he was. The reader will now understand what Mr. Long's business was in Caddo.

In his next visit west he was accompanied by an officer, and clothed with authority from the Governor of the state to arrest one Richard Blackfoot, and take him back to the State of New York on a charge of murder.

The Doctor had so far recovered as to be able to walk about the house and yard by the aid of a crutch and cane, but was still quite weak, and plead inability for such a journey and asked to be allowed to remain at home until his health was more fully recovered. This the officers refused to grant unless he could give a bond of ten thousand dollars for his appearance at the December term of court in Albany, N. Y., without further trouble or expense to them.

Never had Dr. Blackfoot felt so completely crushed. He had always refused to aid any one in distress, and he now felt that he had not a friend in the wide world, to whom he could look for help. His recent speculations had been so disastrous, and his losses in other ways heavy, so that a mortgage on every dollars' worth of property he had would not half satisfy such a demand as this. Besides, he had just that morning learned of Nora's engagement to George, and had become so enraged over the matter that he had written young Hartley an insulting note, warning him never to cross his threshold. Dr. Hartley was already sick from anxiety, exposure,

over-work and loss of sleep, and after receiving this gross insult after all he had done for the family, a raging fever came on and ran so high that he was compelled to take his bed. But on learning in the afternoon of the trouble in which Nora's father was placed, he staggered to his feet, and although it seemed that his head would almost burst with every step, yet, on he went to Johnson's store and asked him to send a note to Dr. Blackfoot, informing him that a friend wished to meet him in the private office of said store. The Doctor replied by a note that he would be there in a few minutes. But George was too sick to sit up while waiting for him, so dropped down on the same lounge on which Dr. Blackfoot had found him wounded and bleeding more than five years before.

There was a side dressing room to the office, in which Mr. Slathers happened to be at the time, trying on a suit of clothes he had just purchased, and from this dressing room he could distinctly overhear every word spoken by any one in the office. When the Doctor hobbled in with his crutch and cane and saw only George there, his wrath seemed to know no bounds, as he supposed the young man merely wished a reconciliation on Nora's account; so, with an oath, said, as George arose to a sitting posture:

“Are you the d——d puppy that sent for me?”

“Doctor,” calmly replied George, “I have learned that you are in trouble, and if you will accept aid from me, I think I can help you. Of course, no one here believes you guilty of the crime with which you are charged, but, even if you were, you are hardly able for such a journey as this yet. I think that myself and friends can secure the bond required for your appear-

ance at the December term of court, and it will be much better for you to remain at home where you can receive every needed attention, than to be situated as you would be, amongst strangers, and thus be deprived of many home comforts."

A very demon seemed to have possession of Dr. Blackfoot, for he replied:

"*Go to h—l* with your aid and sympathy. When I want any of either, I'll call on a man with more money and brains, too, than you ever had."

"Doctor," pleaded Hartley, "something seems to tell me that this is to be our last meeting on earth. I am sick; so let us part as friends for the sake of her whom we both love."

But instead of taking George's proffered hand, he struck at it with his cane, as he receded through the door with an oath upon his lips.

While the officers had not, up to this time, put the Doctor under arrest, yet they had kept an eye on his movements, and did not let him get out of their sight. Following him out, as he left Mr. Johnson's store, they asked him if he was prepared to give the required bond.

"No," said he doggedly, "but if you have no more consideration than to take a corpse, why, just take me along as soon as you d——d please."

The next train that moved out of Caddo took with it one passenger who will never again look on this stirring little "gas belt" city. But, as the reader will not be interested in following this case through a long court trial, we will briefly state that Dr. Blackfoot slept and ate behind prison bars in Albany, N. Y., until the December term of the criminal court, in which his case was tried, when the verdict of murder was rendered by

the unanimous vote of the jury, and his sentence was imprisonment for life.

When this word reached Caddo, Pat Murphy, who was one of the Doctor's few friends, said :

“ Sintinced for loife, did yez say?”

“ Yes, sir,” answered Slathers, “ imprisonment fer life with hard labor. The cussid ole skunk has got his dues at last.”

“ Faix,” cried Pat, “ an’ that baste av a jedge surely had no oiyes at all about him, or, be dad, he could have seen that the poor devil was that wake he could nivir live to sarve out half his sintince.”

As the limits of this book will not permit us to follow many of our characters further, we will merely state that Arch decided, soon after his father's downfall, to seek his fortune in Western Texas, as he found his friends were few in Caddo after his father's wealth was gone. His worse than widowed mother, and sister, Belle, with her deformed, feeble and almost idiotic children and husband still remain in the old home ; but neither of them have much knowledge of business management, and have allowed Fin to take charge of the remains of the estate, which he is squandering as rapidly as he can convert any part of it into cash ; so that it is only a question of time when they will become dependent upon other parties for support.

As intimated in a former chapter, Mr. Slathers was triumphantly elected sheriff, the fight made against him by Tom Elliott and his friends, including the saloon element, having greatly increased his popularity with all good citizens ; while evil doers have just cause to fear, if they do not like him, for he has made the best officer in this capacity that the county has ever had.

But he says his experience as sheriff will never make him "hanker arter bein' the President of these 'ere United States."

Tom Elliott and Fin Mincer are still Caddo's champion curbstone politicians, both claiming a wonderfully large following in all local, and even state and national elections, and they are constantly seeking an opportunity to wield their mighty (?) influence in favor of any candidate who is foolish enough to give them anything for their support.

Dr. Buckwether still remains in Caddo, but the Methodists have dropped his name from their list of church membership, since learning of his connection with the saloon and pool room business, in addition to his other hypocrisy. But for reasons upon which the next chapter will throw more light, a younger and much more honorable physician has taken the greater part of his former practice.

Rob Johnson married an eastern lady with whom he became acquainted at Oberlin College, and has since located with his brother-in-law in Kansas City, where they are doing a thriving dry goods business.

But as we have left George Hartley prostrated with encroaching disease, in addition to the gross insults heaped upon him by Nora's father, we must now follow this young physician into the shadow of death.

CHAPTER XLIV.

IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH.—THE WEDDING.—

JOSHUA IS HAPPY.

“Honored be woman! she beams on the sight,
Graceful and fair, like a being of light;
Scatters around her wherever she strays,
Roses of bliss o’er our thorn covered ways;
Roses of Paradise, sent from above,
To be gathered and twined in a garland of love.

She, like the harp, that instinctively rings,
As the night breathing zephyr soft sighs on the strings,
Responds to each impulse with ready reply,
Whether sorrow or pleasure her sympathy try,
And teardrops and smiles on her countenance play,
Like the sunshine and showers of a morning in May.”

DR. Hartley had miscalculated on his strength, and on receiving such a cruel and insulting repulse from the man he really wished to befriend for Nora’s sake, a pain like a crashing shot darted through his fevered brain, and he fell back on the lounge, prostrate and unconscious. His long exposure in the sick room, with scarcely an hour’s rest day or night for several weeks, in addition to the almost mortal agony of suspense he had just passed through, was too much for even his strong constitution to withstand, and this last cruel blow from the father of his betrothed, seemed to drive all power of reasoning from him. How long he

had lain in this condition he did not know, but when partial consciousness returned he found Mr. Slathers by his side, tenderly bathing his head and fanning his fevered face, and Mr. Johnson also anxiously bending over him.

“D’ye feel any better, George?” said his sympathetic friend as the sufferer slowly opened his eyes, and with a slight nod, looked the words of gratitude which he could not yet speak.

“I’ve sent fer yer father an’ Dr. Truworthy, an’ they’ll soon be here, George, but I hope the wust is over now, an’ when yer fever goes down you’ll be all right.”

Several others, out of sympathy or curiosity, had offered their services, but Slathers said to Mr. Johnson :

“Don’t let ary man on ’em come in here, fer he needs all the air he kin git in sich a box as this, an’ we kin do all as needs doin’ ’till the Doctor gits here.”

Dr. Truworthy soon came in, and after making a short but careful examination of the sufferer, said to Mr. Johnson, whom she called out of the room for consultation :

“He is a very sick man, and I fear this will prove to be a most malignant case of typhoid fever. I called to see him yesterday, and advised him to keep his room and remain perfectly quiet. Why he is here, I cannot understand, but presume he must have left his room in a delirious fit of fever and knew not what he was doing. It will hardly be safe to undertake getting him back home, so we will take him to my house until he is better able to be removed so far.”

But just then his father and mother came in, and they insisted that he should be taken back home if this could,

with any safety, be done. So it was decided that he should be taken just as he lay on the lounge, and as there were plenty of strong and willing hands ready to render any service possible, George Hartley was again carried from this room, on the same lounge that had borne his wounded form years before to his father's house.

He seemed much revived soon after reaching his own room and bed, and talked cheerfully to his friends, thanking them for their kindness and saying he was feeling much better and hoped he should give them no further trouble. But his devoted friend, Slathers, asked, as a special favor, that he might be permitted to remain with him as long as they needed extra help.

"Mrs. Hartley," said he, as they were temporarily together in another room, "I know better'n eny one else what's caused him to be tuck wuss so suddent, an' I think I kin be uv some sarvice to you, an' him, too, when the right time comes."

"Certainly," replied Mrs. Hartley, "we shall be glad to have you here as much of the time as you can be, for George has always loved you as an older brother, and I am sure we would much rather pay you well for your services than to have strangers present who do not understand caring for the sick, since so much will now depend on proper nursing in his case."

"Don't talk 'bout pay, Mrs. Hartley. Why, I tell ye what's a fact, but mebbly you don't know it; Maggie Warren would a been dead, an' my mother would a been dead, an' the Lord only knows how meny more ef it hadn't been fer that grand boy uv your'n a workin' day an' night like a Turk to save 'em, with never a thought fer hissself, lessen he, too, mought be tuck down sick frum so much exposure an' loss uv sleep. An' then

he knowed jist what to do, an' when they wusn't nusses enough, he jist rolled up his sleeves an' done the nussin' hisself, as nice as eny woman could a done it. I tell you, Mrs. Hartley, when I seed the way George worked to save Maggie an' my mother, thinks I to myself, young man, ef ever it lays in my way to resk my life fer your'n I'll do it, an' don't you forgit it."

"I thank you, Joshua, for your high appreciation of George; but do you think he was more attentive to Maggie and your mother than to other patients?"

"No, it's not adzactly that, Mrs. Hartley, fer he done everything he could fer all on 'em, the poorest as well as the richest, but them 'ere two wimen you mentioned is wuth more'n their weight in gold to me, an' when George, an' all the rest uv the sick ones gits well, Maggie an' me—; but no difference 'bout that now, fer the fust thing is to see George on his feet agin, an' no nonsense fer me 'till he is outen danger, an' I kalkerlate he's overcrapped hisself a doin' fer others."

"I am glad you feel as you do, Joshua, toward my poor, sick boy. I, too, fear George has sacrificed his life by this afternoon's work. All of his efforts put forth for the relief of the sick while he was well we have fully approved; but his efforts to-day for Dr. Blackfoot's accommodation were surely ill-advised and uncalled for, and we did all we could to dissuade him from such an imprudent course; but when he said, 'I know not the meaning of imprudence when duty calls me to the relief of others,' we said no more. But if we had known how sick he was, we should have prevented his going in some way."

The friends who had assisted in conveying George back to his sick room soon left, excepting Mr. Slathers,

who now almost worshipped the young Doctor, and he resolved to spend the greater part of his time with him so long as his assisting care was needed. The patient was carefully watched that night and every effort made to keep his fever down, and he seemed considerably better the next morning, although he had slept but little through the night. Bright hopes were now entertained, that, with his naturally good constitution and temperate habits, he might be able to throw off the disease, and recover without further serious trouble. But, as life's brightest hopes, like sweetest flowers, are often soonest blighted, so they were in this case; for his fever now gradually increased, and as neither food nor medicine could be retained by the patient, it was soon apparent that the disease was rapidly assuming a malignant form, which seemed to be beyond any human power to control; and before another week had passed the young Doctor was delirious much of the time from the effects of his raging fever. At such times he was frequently heard calling faintly:

“Nora—Nora—don't leave me—Nora.”

At other times he seemed to think Nora's father was present, and would speak with the greatest kindness:

“Doctor—I can help you,—believe me—I am your friend—for Nora's sake; give me a chance—will you? Nora's father.”

Then again he would call:

“Nora, Nora, where are you, dear? She did live. She said—would live for me. Nora, darling, where are you? Nora—I'm sick—now, but mother will love you—for my—sake—and take—care of you—my own—darling—Nora.”

“Poor boy,” sighed his mother, as she stroked her hand soothingly over his fevered brow, while the hot tears traced each other in rapid succession down her sorrowing cheeks; “he was always so self-sacrificing, and he is, even now, in his delirium, thinking more of other’s than of his own comfort.”

“Yes,” said Slathers, “an’ I’m goin’ to bring Nora here to-night, ef you air willin’; fer she told me this mornin’ that she’d come in a minit ef she thought you wouldn’t object. But they’re awful cut down now that Doc.’s been arrested an’ tuck off an’ she’s afeard you moughtn’t want her about. But, Mrs. Hartley, Nora ain’t no Blackfoot; an’ I believe he wants her with him, an’ he can’t last long nohow, less’n he gits help some way soon. You know what Dr. Truworthy said, ’at medicine couldn’t save him now, an’ I’d as soon resk her ’pinion as eny on ’em in a bad case uv fever like this.”

“You are right, Joshua, and I wish you would go and bring Nora at *once*, for we shall be glad to have her here, if she wishes to come.”

“I think, Alice,” said Mr. Hartley, “that I had better go, for then the poor girl will feel *sure* she is welcome.”

“Yes, Mr. Hartley, that’s the ticket. I’d druther *you* would go an’ bring her, fer she’s nearly killed sence she’s a finden’ out what a ornery cuss her father is; an’ I’m a-feard I didn’t make her feel none too good to’ards me, fer I blurted out right in her face this mornin’ afore I thought, that ef Doc. Blackfoot wusn’t a murderer, it wusn’t ’cause he’s none too good to be one; an’ ef ever he comes back to this town, I’ll thrash him outen his boots fer the way he treated George, jist afore he wuz ’rested, arter George had done so much fer him.”

Although quiet talking in the room did not excite the sufferer in the least, as he seemed to be entirely unconscious of everything going on around him, yet this conversation was brought to a close by a gentle tap at the door by the servant, who said, Miss Blackfoot was in the parlor below, and asked if she could see George.

“Certainly,” answered Mr. Hartley, “I will go down and bring her up.” And following the servant down to the parlor, he gave the grief stricken girl a cordial greeting, and taking her hand warmly in his own, said:

“You are truly welcome, my daughter, for *George has told us all*; and wether he lives or dies, you shall take the place in our hearts as *his* wife, and *our* child.”

This reception was so unexpectedly kind, that Nora involuntarily threw her arms around the neck of the noble man, whom she had always honored, but now loved with a new-born affection, begotten of grief, and wept tears of mingled sorrow and joy. Sorrow for the worse than death of her own father; joy at the unexpected assurance of another and *better* parent.

“Come, child,” kindly said Mr. Hartley, “your place is at George’s bedside;” and willingly taking his offered arm, she was led by him up to the sick room, where she was as warmly greeted by George’s mother as she had been by his father. After this kindly greeting, Mrs. Hartley led Nora to the bedside of her unconscious lover, over whom she fondly bent, while the hot tears that streamed from her eyes, bathed both his cheeks and hers as she imprinted kiss after kiss upon them.

“Oh, George, dear George,” sobbed she, “don’t you know me?”

A silence of several moments ensued, but no sign of recognition could she elicit. Then his mother called ;

“ George, George, you have been calling for Nora ; she is here now. Can’t you speak to her ? ”

Still there was no indication by either word or look that he was conscious of her presence.

“ Dear George, my own darling,” sobbed Nora again, “ you have risked your own dear noble life twice to save mine. Oh, dear ! must I lose you now ? ” and after imprinting almost frantic kisses on his cheek and brow, she turned to Mrs. Hartley and said :

“ Mother—for I must call you mother *to-night*—George told me that your sweet angel voice in prayer called me back from the very gates of death, and, Oh, can’t you call him, your own son back ? God will answer your prayer, and He alone can give this precious life back to us now.”

With this appeal, the father, mother, Nora, and even Mr. Slathers, reverently kneeled by the bedside of the unconscious loved one, and the cry of faith was carried on the wings of prayer to Heaven’s gate, begging that the precious life so dear to them all, might be given back to them, for the sake of Him who said, “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.”

After arising from their knees, Nora began bathing his head and fanning his fevered cheeks, while she felt a confiding assurance that this petition was recorded in heaven, and *could not* return unanswered.

Soon the sufferer slowly opened his eyes, and after looking intently at her for a moment, smiled and said :

“ Nora—you did—come. I thought—you—would—come—to see me.”

A thrill of joy ran through her soul as she said :

“ Yes, dear, I have come to stay with you now until you are well.”

He faintly smiled, but made no further effort to speak for hours. It was now thought best that two of the watchers should retire for rest and sleep, in order that they could take charge in the latter part of the night; and as Mrs. Hartley and Mr. Slathers had been taking the latter part of the night, Mr. Hartley and Nora took charge while the others slept. At two o'clock, Mr. Hartley proposed calling the other watchers, when Nora said :

“ Please do not call Mrs. Hartley ; she has lost *so much* sleep, that I fear she, too, will soon be sick. I shall not leave George, for I cannot sleep nor rest until he is out of danger.”

While they were talking, both Mrs. Hartley and Mr. Slathers came into the sick-room, as they had been in the habit of awaking at that hour, and they insisted on the other watchers retiring now for rest. But Nora kindly, yet firmly, refused to leave her lover until she felt sure she was not needed, as he was perfectly quiet when *her* hands were about his head, while he seemed restless when any one else took her place.

Mr. Hartley, however, tried to reason with her, saying : “ As you have just recovered from a dangerous illness, it is surely unsafe for you to expose yourself in this way so soon.”

“ I was taken sick *then*,” replied she bending her eyes lovingly on George, “ more from fear that *he* cared nothing for me, than from exposure or anything else ; and now I can, and *must* live for him, and I shall nurse him back to health as he did me.”

And scarcely an hour at a time, day or night, did Nora leave the bedside of her sick lover, for ten days from the time she first entered his room ; for it was more than a week before any clearly perceptible change for the better was noticed, farther than what was apparent soon after she had taken her place by his bedside. Her love was so devoted, her efforts so untiring, and her solicitous watching so tender and constant, that she won the admiration of all, for her true womanly virtues, and especially that of Mr. and Mrs. Hartley, who had always highly respected her, but now that they clearly saw in her the pure gold of unselfish womanhood, they took her into their heart of hearts, as their own child.

Another week of watchful care passed before the young Doctor was considered out of danger ; but from that time on, the improvement was constant and rapid. As George's parents and Nora were sitting alone with him one day, after he was able to sit propped up in bed, Mr. Hartley said :

“George, you have your Nora to thank for getting up again ; for we were all doing our best for you, and you kept growing worse all the time, until she came, and we know it was not the medicine, for we couldn't get a drop down you for nearly a week before, and after she came.”

“I know it, father ; I could tell the touch of her hand in a thousand, if I were blind. When I would drop to sleep it seemed to me that I was falling—falling—falling, but when she was rubbing my head it seemed to steady me, and I could rest easy with no fear of falling. So it must have been this rest which she gave me that has pulled me through.”

“No, George,” said Nora, “it was a *higher* power and a stronger hand than *mine*, that has lifted you up, for we all felt that first sad night I watched at your bedside, that *God alone* could give back your life to us; and I trust I have learned a lesson of faith from your Christian mother that I shall never forget. More than this, I could have done but little for you without the consent and help of your parents, who have been more than father and mother to me since I have been with you.”

“Yes, George, Nora is right,” said Mr Hartley, “for she put it into our hearts to ask heaven to spare your life, and it seemed impossible that God would refuse an answer to such a petition as your mother made that night. But with all this, our heavenly Father expects us to do all in our power to *aid* in answering our *own* prayers, and with such efficient nursing as Nora has made it possible for you to have, you have been almost miraculously brought back from the very “shadow of death.”

“Well, I can only say, God bless you all, and may He let me live to, in *part*, at least, repay you for all this kindness. But, Nora, you look so pale; I fear you have overtaxed your strength in caring for me.”

And he bent an anxious look of love on her, that sent such a thrill of joy through her soul that the color came to her cheek as she replied:

“Don’t give yourself any anxiety on my account, George; we shall all be well, now that *you* are out of danger.”

Dr. Hartley continued to improve rapidly, and the following week, as he was sitting in his invalid chair, Nora and he being alone in the room, quite a little

combat ensued through his efforts to steal a kiss, when she declared he was becoming so mean, she was going home to leave him until he got to be a better boy.

"I'll get sick again to spite you, Nora, if you do," said he, playfully, "for I can't get even one little kiss now unless I steal it ; and I know you've plenty of them, for you give them to father and mother every day."

"Oh, you great bear ; just wait 'till I get you in leading strings, and I'll teach you how to behave yourself like a nice boy, and not become jealous of your good father and mother. But, George, do you know they made me so welcome when I came that first night ? And they both kissed me and called me their child, when I was so much afraid to come for fear they would drive me away, now that I am a criminal's daughter."

"Drive you away, darling ? *Never*. They know I have loved you for years, Nora, and they have always been so good and kind to me, that I have told them everything ; and when I told them that you had promised to be mine forever, I could see that they just took you into their hearts where I have always been. And now, Nora, I am not the pauper that some have supposed me to be, for my uncle, George Wentworth, of Cincinnati, settles ten thousand dollars of gas stock on me as a wedding present, and my father has a constant income from his gas stock, that is worth more than the products of a dozen good farms ; so we can begin house-keeping now whenever you are ready."

"Oh, George, I almost wish you were not worth a dollar in the world," said Nora, as she buried her face in his bosom, "for then we could begin life together, and you would know I marry *you* for *yourself alone*. and

not your stocks, money, home, or anything else; for I must tell you that my father's speculations of late have been so disastrous that there will scarcely be a comfortable living left for mother; while Archie, Belle, and I, will be left practically penniless, and I cannot become your wife without letting you know the worst."

"Nora, my highest earthly ambition has been to give you a nice, elegant home, where I can crown you my queen; and that hope can now be realized, and you shall say whether we are to wait until your castle is built, or whether we shall begin house-keeping on a smaller scale in rented property, and then build the residence afterward."

"George, I don't care for any grand mansion to live in; my idea of a home is a cozy little residence, with beautiful surroundings. I think it is a sin to put almost a fortune in a great mansion, when such a house is no more convenient nor comfortable than one much less expensive, while money can be used to so much better advantage in other ways; and I am ready to become Mrs. Hartley whenever you feel like taking such a burden to care for, and——"

"There—take that—and that—and that," said George, as he almost smothered her with kisses, before she could finish the sentence.

"You are the rarest jewel on earth, Nora, and you shall have just such a house as *suits you*. I do not want any great, lonesome castle to live in either, for I fear my little wife would get lost in it, if she did not kill herself trying to keep it in order. So, if Christmas eve is not too soon for you to become my little prisoner, I can have the cottage on the corner of Elm and Vine streets

nicely furnished for you by that time, and we can build such a house as you wish afterward."

"When I promised to be yours alone forever, George, I made no reservation, and I make none now. I only pray that God will aid me in being your true helpmate, and worthy to share your honored name."

"But you have not said whether Christmas eve will suit you or not, Nora."

"Three weeks seem a short time to make preparation for a wedding, George, and you still confined to your room."

"None too short for me, dear, but you must name the happy day. My uncle Wentworth is coming up from the City on Christmas eve, and I should so much like to present you to him as my wife, at that time, if you will only consent, Nora. If you don't speak soon," said George, as he imprinted another kiss on her glowing cheek, "I shall claim that silence gives consent."

"I'll be silent then, George, for I can never willingly displease you. But you don't need me here any longer, and I am going home."

Just then Mrs. Hartley's well known step was heard in the hall, and Nora said, as she entered the room:

"Mrs. Hartley, your boy is becoming so mean and saucy, I shall have to leave him and go home; so if he has any further need of me, he will have to call on me."

And as she threw on her cloak and jaunty hat, a half hour later, and kissed her prospective mother-in-law good by, she whispered:

"George says I may call you *mother*, after Christmas eve."

"You may call me mother now, if you wish, Nora, for I have called you daughter from the depths of my

heart ever since I have seen your pure, womanly devotion to our George."

* * * * *

Christmas eve soon came, and with it, health to George and others generally who had been sick. The reader will remember a five hundred dollar note that Mr. Wentworth placed, with other papers, in a sealed package, and gave to George to be held by him until called for. Just before his nephew left the City, Mr. Wentworth told him jokingly, that if he was married to Miss Blackfoot before Christmas he would make him a present of ten thousand dollars of his gas stock; also that he might take the sealed package with him, as there was a Christmas present in it for his mother, which he might give to her if anything prevented *him* from being present at the time. Accordingly, soon after his engagement to Nora, George wrote his uncle all about it, and jokingly claimed the gas stock. Mr. Wentworth promptly replied that he had made the promise in good faith, and as he should be with them on Christmas eve, he should take pleasure in bestowing the gift, but in compensation should claim the first kiss from the bride.

* * * * *

Mrs. Blackfoot's parlor was brilliantly lighted, but only a few of the tried and true friends of the bride and groom were present, among whom were George's parents and Uncle Wentworth from the city, also Josh and Maggie, since a quiet wedding, under the circumstances, was desired by all parties.

After the ceremony and benediction by the Rev. Litchfield, Mr. Wentworth was the first to offer congratulations, and said:

“George, under a previous contract I am entitled to the first kiss from the bride,” and stooping to Nora’s sweet lips, she most graciously bestowed it on him.

Just before the guests bade the bride and groom good-night, many beautiful gifts were presented to the happy pair, but Nora seemed to be the favored one; so Mr. Wentworth, who had previously asked George for the package he had entrusted to him for safe keeping, opened it, and said:

“George, you have shown yourself to be every whit a man, and as a substantial recognition of your honor, integrity and kind treatment toward me, I herewith present to you one hundred shares of stock in the Hartley Natural Gas Company, which you will find properly transferred by these papers. And I shall expect you to take the vice-presidency of the company on the first of the coming year, as I cannot give it the required attention, situated as I am in the City.”

Then handing George’s mother the five hundred dollar note which Mr. Hartley had given him a year before, he said:

“Alice, as Christmas is a time for us all to be happy, I will make you a present of this note which I have held on a wealthy man in the Natural Gas Belt, and if you fail to collect it, the fault will not be mine, as it is worth its face in gold.”

A silent tear of gratitude was Mrs. Hartley’s eloquent answer, as she bestowed a warm, sisterly kiss on the cheek of her noble brother; while George could only say:

“God bless you, uncle, for all your generous kindness to me. I hope I shall never bring disgrace to your honored name.”

“You never will, George,” replied his uncle, “unless you first dishonor God by neglecting your higher obligations to Him. But it is growing late, so we must bid you good-night.”

Josh and Maggie remained for a short time after the other guests had departed, as they had a secret which they wished to communicate to George and Nora alone.

“By gosh, George,” exclaimed Slathers, as the four were seated alone near the beautiful gas fire; “I allers figgered ’at you’d come up a smilin’ some time, but durned ef I did ’spect to see you boosted clean to the top notch at one hunch; but thar ye air, with a nice pile uv money on top uv yer fine medical edication to start on, and the purttest pullet in Caddo fer a wife, ’ceptin’ Maggie, uv course, an’ cusst ef I ain’t durned glad uv it.”

“Ah, Joshua, have you forgotten?” asked Maggie, as she gently pressed his arm.

“Oh, I beg pardon, Maggie. I did promise you that I’d swear off an’ quit usin’ sich fool cuss words afore New Year’s, but then I’ve got a week yit afore I ’gin trottin’ in double harness ’long with you.”

“Well, I see I have a life work before me,” said Maggie, “as I have undertaken to reform an old bachelor; but if I can ever succeed in getting his language as pure and clean as his life and character have been, I shall be proud of the man I am to call my husband. For, as Joshua has intimated, we are to be married on New Year’s eve, and you, George and Nora, are to be our first and most honored guests.”

“Oh, is that so?” cried Nora.

“Yes, marm, that’s jist the size uv it,” said Josh, and awkwardly pointing his large thumb toward Maggie,

continued, "an' you'll hev to call her Mrs. Slathers arter New Years, fer ther won't be no Maggie Warren 'bout these parts arter that date."

"Well," exclaimed George, as he warmly clasped the hand of each, "we shall certainly take great pleasure in accepting your kind invitation, for there is no wedding we would rather attend than yours, since there is surely more of the pure gold of genuine, unselfish kindness in your hearts than is often met with in life."

"Please accept my congratulations, also," added Nora, as she followed the example of her husband, in giving each a hearty shake of the hand; "and, Maggie, I shall never forget one verse of that poem you recited four years ago at our lyceum about kind hearts. Do you remember it?"

"I believe not, Nora, what was it?"

"Why, that verse about kind hearts and simple worth:

'How'er it be, it seems to me,
'Tis only noble to be good;
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And *simple worth* than Norman blood.'

And, oh, Maggie, I do so much admire the sentiment of that poem."

"Well, Nora, you know that has always been one of my pet ideas, and it is Joshua's true manly worth and kindness of heart that have won me and made me willing to trust my whole future life with him, and, as I said before, his language is his only defect, and that, I hope will, in time, be remedied."

"Well, Maggie," said Josh, as he fondly encircled her with his strong arm, "you've tackled a hard job,

fer whar I wuz brought up I skacely ever heerd enything but cussin' from eny one, 'ceptin' my mother, an' fer her sake I promised I would not take the name uv the Almighty in vain. I hev too much respect fer her God and her reg'lar, everyday, Bible religion to do sich a dirty thing as that; but I kalkerlate the ole devil has figgered out that I ain't entitled to none too much respect from him, seein' as how I've allers cuffed his name 'round like a ole boot in all my awkerd talk. Yit now, from this time, with God's help added to yours, Maggie, I shall try hard to so conduct myself, as never to bring a blush uv shame to your pure cheek."

But, reader, our story from "real life" must here close. Suffice it to add that the happiest holidays that George and Nora had ever known were passed in the little cottage on Vine street. And with the exception of the dark shadow cast over Nora's life by her father's acts and the infelicitous situation of the other members of her family, she is the happiest woman, and we are sure that Dr. Hartley and Mr. Slathers are two of the happiest men in Caddo; while Maggie has never regretted that she married a true man for his "simple worth."

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